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Chess

WANG HAO WINS

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Editors: Richard Palliser, Matt Read
Associate Editor: John Saunders
Subscriptions Manager: Paul Harrington

Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine
Twitter: @TelegraphChess - Malcolm Pein
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Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein **@TelegraphChess**

Bronze in Batumi

Congratulation to us! The England Open team secured the bronze medals at the European Team Championship staged in Georgia. This was the first time England had won medals in the Open competition since 1997. Following fifth place at the Batumi Olympiad in 2018 and the silver medals at the World Teams, this was another fine result.

It required as much endurance as skill, coming as it did on the back of the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss. David Howell and Luke McShane – whose heroics there are described inside – as well as Gawain Jones had already been through 11 gruelling rounds on the Isle of Man. Luke and particularly David had been on the cusp of qualifying for the Candidates and that must have taken a psychological toll.

There were only 48 hours between the Isle of Man closing ceremony and the start of play at Batumi. As one of those days would be spent travelling, I invested in a pit stop at Istanbul on the way for many of the team so that the other day could be spent resting, at least in part. Securing an upgrade to the Sheraton Hotel at Batumi for the duration meant we could just walk down a few flights and be at the tournament hall, which was also important. At the Olympiad the team's accommodation left a lot to be desired, but this time it was perfect and there was the added bonus of a nice coffee shop with good WiFi a few minutes' walk away.

Captain's Log, Chess Date, the Last Round

Unsurprisingly, things did not start too well as everyone was still pretty tired and we only managed a 2-2 draw with Austria, but after that three wins over Denmark, Sweden and Netherlands set us on our way. It was very good of Nick Pert to agree to come and play just two games and then be on standby. Nick saved the day against Austria and then played against Denmark to give Gawain a badly needed rest.

I should mention my displeasure with the Dutch! After they lost to us, they seemed determined to execute 'Operation Screw England's Tie-Break' – a mission they completed with aplomb in the last round by losing 3½-½ to the hosts. It could have been worse: Anish Giri was completely busted against Baadur Jobava.

B.Jobava-A.Giri
European Team Ch., Batumi 2019
Sicilian Grand Prix Attack

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 f4 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗b5+ ♗d7 6 ♗c4 ♘c6 7 d3 ♘a5 8 ♗d2 e6 9 e5 d5 10 ♗b5 ♘c6 11 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 12 0-0 ♘e7 13 ♗e1 ♕b6 14 a4 d4 15 a5 ♕c7 16 ♘e4 ♗xe4 17 dxe4 ♘c6 18 ♗h4 h6 19 ♕e2 g5 20 fxg5 hxg5 21 ♗xg5 ♘xe5 22 h3 ♘d7 23 a6 0-0 24 axb7 ♕xb7 25 e5 ♕xb2 26 ♖ab1 d3 27 ♕e4 ♕xc2

England versus Sweden in round three of the European Team Championship in Batumi. Gawain Jones had suffered a tough start, but after a day of rest destroyed the Caro-Kann.

Black has been utterly outplayed, but Jobava was short of time. He saw the right idea, but executed it in an imprecise manner.

28 ♖b7?!

28 ♗e3! intends ♘g5 and ...♕c2-e2 does not help: for example, 28...♖fb8 29 ♖bc1 ♕e2 30 ♖f2 traps the queen and here 29...♕a2 30 ♘g5 is terminal.

28...♕e2 29 ♗e3 ♖ad8 30 ♖f2 ♕d1+

30...d2!? was a punt.

31 ♔h2 c4

31...♕a1 keeps e5 under observation, but 32 ♗f4 wins anyway.

32 ♖d2 ♕a1 33 ♖xa7

Everything is back on track for White. Giri now tries one last shot.

33...♗xe5+ 34 g3 ♕c3 35 ♖xd7!

Of course not 35 ♘g5 ♘f6 when Black wins.

35...♖xd7 36 ♘xe5 f5 37 ♕f4 ♖g7 38 ♗d4 ♕c1 39 ♕h6?!

Both 39 ♘f3 ♖g6 40 ♕h4 and 39 ♗b2 ♕e1 40 ♘xc4 were good enough.

39...♖f6! ½-½

Jobava noticed immediately that 40 ♕xf6 ♕xd2+ 41 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 42 ♗g1 ♕e4+ 43 ♔h2 d2 wins for Black. Although 40 ♕f4 c3 41 ♖xd3 ♕xf4 42 gxf4 and here 41...♕c2+ 42 ♔g1 ♕b1+ 43 ♔g2 c2 (or 43...♕c2+ 44 ♗f2) 44 ♖c3 are still winning, a draw was agreed. I don't know who offered it.

Going into the last round we were in the medals mix, but it was pretty clear that while we couldn't match the Ukrainian tie-break we might overhaul the Russians if it became relevant. The tie-break is calculated as the match points total of your opponents multiplied by your board score against them in the match encounter, with the lowest performing opponent eliminated. Once you have defeated a team, you wish them well! Unfortunately the Dutch were seventh seeds and ended up 17th, while 21st seeds Denmark finished 32nd.

Going into the last round I was clutching a series of complex arithmetical scenarios and had to borrow a pen from the chief arbiter to update them as players and captains are obliged to use the pens supplied by the tournament, which is part of the anti-cheating regime. I didn't need the scraps of paper. I'd figured that if Armenia defeated Greece 3-1 or better we would have to defeat Germany in the final match to ensure we stayed in the medals. After what seemed like no time at all, this happened:

H.Melkumyan-H.Banikas
European Team Ch., Batumi 2019
English Opening

1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 d4 cxd4 6 ♘xd4 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 0-0 8 0-0 ♘xd4 9 ♕xd4 d6 10 ♕d3 a6 11 ♗e3 ♕a5 12 ♕d2 ♖e8 13 ♖fd1 ♘g4 14 ♘d5 ♕xd2 15 ♗xd2 ♖b8 16 ♗g5 f6

16...♔f8 17 c5 h6 18 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 19 ♘xe7 ♔xe7 20 cxd6+ ♔d8 21 ♖ac1 is better for White.

17 ♗f4

17...g5?? 17...♘e5 18 ♘c7 ♖d8 19 c5! wasn't nice, but this loses.

18 ♘xe7+! 1-0

18...♖xe7 19 ♗xd6 wins.

It was clear we would have to beat Germany. The match soon took a funny turn. Mickey was totally solid with Black while Gawain was clearly not going to win with White. Luke's opening had slightly misfired, but he started to outplay Matthias Bluebaum and I could see the German captain GM Dorian Rogozenko starting to look concerned. In the meantime, David was looking quite comfortable against Daniel Fridman with whom he has an excellent personal score.

Norway's Women's side at the European Team Championship was quite something, featuring two sets of twins, as can be seen from the photo of the Machlik and Kyrkjebø sets of sisters.

In this position there was one of the weirdest episodes I have ever been involved with. In FIDE team competitions, limited communication between players and captains is allowed. Captains can request a player offers a draw or, if one is offered, the player can ask the captain if they can accept it. I very rarely intervene as the team obviously have a far greater insight into the positions.

Here David has just played 33...♗f4-h6. The a3-pawn is clearly a problem for White. Fridman turned to his captain and asked permission to offer a draw, but as Germany were also in with an outside chance of a medal, Rogozenko said no. As Luke's position was improving, he figured that Fridman's game was probably the best chance of a win as David had about 30 seconds left on his clock and was already playing on increment.

Fridman look rather discomforted and promptly played 34 ♘d4, which I thought was a blunder. As far as I could see, which wasn't very far, it appeared to lead to the loss of the exchange. As soon as he played it, Fridman must have reached a similar conclusion as he then offered the draw anyway. David was somewhat dumbfounded and turned round to ask my view. Having seen David play brilliantly with 30 seconds left on his clock countless times, I shook my head...

As the other three boards were drawn just before or after the time control, David knew what he had to do and he heroically secured the win despite being exhausted as, like Mickey, he had played all nine games. To that point he had played 483 moves in eight games and another 75 were required to finish the job. Truly sterling stuff.

My thanks to everyone involved, including the Women's team who fought hard despite being outrated most of the time. Mickey's return to form was both welcome and impressive. His superb victory over Dmitry Andreikin, who was in great form, saved the match against Russia. A full report inside.

11th London Chess Classic

Readers who cannot make it to the London Chess Classic at Olympia can follow the action at londonchessclassic.com. The LCC festival begins with the FIDE Open on Friday November 29th from where the top boards will be broadcast. The Grand Chess Tour final starts on Monday December 2nd. The match format will again be two classical games followed by a day of Rapid and Blitz. There is $350,000 at stake in the GCT finals with $150,000 to the winner. You can enjoy live commentary from St. Louis online, or on-site commentary at Olympia on the final weekend.

At time of writing, I can only tell you that Magnus Carlsen definitely plays. Although he is already qualified, Carlsen still competes at the final qualifier at Kolkata and I understand from his camp that he is anxious to 'correct the impression' given at the St. Louis Rapid and Blitz where he collapsed. I expect him to try and impose himself on the field and get in a good frame of mind for London.

The results at Kolkata will determine the three other finalists. The current leading scores are: Carlsen (54.5), Ding Liren (37.8), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (36.8), Levon

Aronian (36.5), Sergey Karjakin (36.5), Vishy Anand (32), Fabiano Caruana (26.5), and Wesley So (26).

It looks like Ding Liren and Levon Aronian will make it to London. Vishy Anand needs to come fifth or better on home soil to overtake Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and claim the third remaining spot. Along with Karjakin and Caruana, MVL is 'in the clubhouse', while his rivals can add to their overall scores at Kolkata. Wesley So has a mathematical chance to get to London, but only if he wins the final event.

The British Knockout begins on Saturday November 30th with the qualifier, to which I have invited our best female and under-25 players.

The Parisian Candidate?

In any case I am sure MVL would rather focus on the last leg of FIDE Grand Prix in Jerusalem which begins just two days after the conclusion of the LCC. Qualifying for the GCT final might potentially be big money, but the real prize is a place in the Candidates. MVL currently lies second and the top two qualify. Alexander Grischuk's victory at Hamburg – more on that next month – pretty much ensures he is a Candidate again.

The Grand Prix standings are: Grischuk 20, Vachier-Lagrave 13, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov 10, and Ian Nepomniachtchi 9. Each Grand Prix is a 16-player knock-out. Winning the first match scores a point and winning the quarter-final another two. The losing finalist gets five points and the victor eight. Also, any match won without the need for a tie-break secures a bonus point. It's going to be very tight come Jerusalem.

Chess and Female Empowerment

I'm delighted to announce that Judit Polgar will be attending the London Chess Conference. This year's theme is 'Chess and Female Empowerment'. The conference is taking place just down the road from Olympia in Hammersmith and you can learn more about it at londonchessconference.com. One of the biggest problems the game faces today is the imbalance between the number of men and women playing the game and I hope the conference will be a boost to the collective effort to improve matters.

Your Man took a Hell of a Beating

If his disaster at the St. Louis rapid and blitz wasn't enough, Carlsen almost certainly got the biggest pasting of his career at the Chess 960 or Fischer Random World Championships staged in Norway and, of course, televised there. Carlsen has recently declared he does not want to defend his real world title in Norway. He often under-performs on home soil, so I can understand why.

There was an online qualifier from which three players got through to join Carlsen. In the semi-finals, Carlsen got the better of

By the time you read this, will Maxime Vachier-Lagrave be on his way to London and the finals of the Grand Chess Tour or busy preparing for the final FIDE Grand Prix in Jerusalem?

Fabiano Caruana, while Wesley So overcame Ian Nepomniachtchi. In the final, So reigned supreme and, as a famous Norwegian football commentator once intoned (nearly): "Your boy took a hell of a beating." The last six games didn't need to be played because So ran riot, winning three of the 'Slow Rapid' games and drawing one. He then closed out the match with a win and a draw in the 'Fast Rapid' to win 5-1, which was equivalent to 13½-2½ in the scoring system employed.

FIDE were quick to jump in and sanction this event which seems to me a little premature. I guess there was some money in it for them, but an online qualifier and a world champion seeded into the four-player final doesn't feel like a world championship cycle to me.

Each of the 960 starting positions brings its own challenges. In this game, from the online qualifier, the challenge was to activate the queen. Nepo achieves this, whereas Firouzja finds his queen chased back to base.

I.Nepomniachtchi-A.Firouzja
World Fischer Random,
Internet (rapid) 2019

1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♘b3 ♘b6 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♘xe4 0-0 6 f4 h6

Maybe 6...g6!?.

7 0-0 ♕h7 8 c3 ♗f5 9 g4! ♗xe4 10 ♖xe4 e6?

Black is already in trouble. If 10...♕g6 11 f5 ♕d6 12 ♗f4 ♕d5 13 ♗f3 and 10...♘c8 11 ♗c2 also looks grim.

11 ♘c5

Winning the b7-pawn.

11...♗e7 12 ♘xb7 ♖b8 13 ♖e2!

Hitting the knight on c6 with the queen and preparing ♗c2. The game is already won.

13...♘d5 14 ♗c2 ♕h8

Ali had a queen, he thought she had a future; Nepo had another plan – Get Back!

15 ♘c5 ♖bd8 16 ♕e4 ♗xc5 17 dxc5 h5 18 f5 exf5 19 ♖xf5 1-0

19...♘ce7 20 ♖xh5 completes the queen's humiliation.

60 Seconds with...

GM Jonathan Rowson

Born: 18th April 1977, Aberdeen.

Place of residence: Putney, London.

Occupation: I'm Director of Perspectiva, which is an applied research institute building an integrated understanding of systems, souls and society in theory and practice.

Enjoyable? A joyous struggle.

And home life? Likewise.

But sometimes good to escape to: Chess, believe it or not.

Sports played or followed: Not really, but I often find myself in goal when my children are playing football in the park.

A favourite novel? *Zen in the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* was a major formative influence; it's 'about' motorcycle maintenance in the same way my new book, *The Moves That Matter*, is 'about' chess.

Piece of music? I like Indian classical music, particularly Hariprasad Chaurasia, and often work to it, while the drum beat at the beginning of Paul Simon's 'Obvious Child' never fails to lift the spirits.

Film or TV series? Too painful to choose one, but for some reason I have cried rivers every time I have watched the Spanish-language film, *La Lengua de las Mariposas* ('The Butterfly's Tongue').

What's the best thing about playing chess? Concentration. Beauty. Depth. Read my new book! It's all in there.

And the worst? The time it takes. We only have so much time, and there are other things we might be doing...

Your best move? Marrying my wife Siva.

But less memorable than your worst move? In good faith I can't really say I regret anything. At some deeper level it always feels like things are unfolding as they should be.

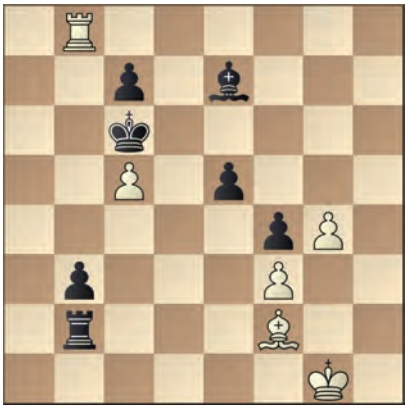
And a highly memorable opponent? I had a decent game with Carlsen in the 2008 Dresden Olympiad, but Julian Hodgson was probably the most influential opponent in terms of my formation as a player – he taught me a lot about practical chess.

Favourite game of all time? It's not spectacular, but Znosko-Borovsky against Alekhine made a deep impression on me, for reasons outlined in the book.

E.Znosko-Borovsky-A.Alekhine
Paris 1933
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 d6 6 c3 ♗d7 7 ♖e1 ♗e7 8 d4 0-0 9 ♘bd2 ♗e8 10 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♘xe5 ♗xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♕xd1 14 ♘xf6+ gxf6!? 15 ♖xd1 fxe5 16 ♗h6 ♖fd8 17 ♔f1 f5 18 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19 g3 ♔f7 20 ♗e3 h5!

21 ♔e2 ♔e6 22 ♖d1 ♖g8 23 f3 h4 24 ♗f2 hxg3 25 hxg3 ♖h8 26 ♗g1 ♗d6 27 ♔f1 ♖g8 28 ♗f2 b5! 29 b3 a5 30 ♔g2 a4 31 ♖d2 axb3 32 axb3 ♖a8 33 c4? ♖a3 34 c5 ♗e7 35 ♖b2 b4! 36 g4 f4 37 ♔f1 ♖a1+ 38 ♔e2 ♖c1 39 ♖a2 ♖c3 40 ♖a7 ♔d7 41 ♖b7 ♖xb3 42 ♖b8 ♖b2+ 43 ♔f1 b3 44 ♔g1 ♔c6!



45 ♔f1 ♔d5 46 ♖b7 e4 47 fxe4+ ♔xe4 48 ♖xc7 ♔f3 49 ♖xe7 ♖xf2+ 50 ♔e1 b2 51 ♖b7 ♖c2 52 c6 ♔g3 53 c7 f3 54 ♔d1 ♖xc7 55 ♖xb2 f2 0-1

The best three chess books: I feel I have to pass on that – it's somehow just too painful to think back and decide.

Is FIDE doing a good job? There is always scope for improvement.

Or Chess Scotland? I'm a bit out of the loop to be honest, but still grateful for all they did for me when I was a child.

Any advice for either? Read my book! I'm only half joking. We are underselling chess because we don't communicate its value as well as we could.

Can chess make one happy? Yes, but happiness is not the most important thing, as chapter 8 shows.

A tip please for the club player: Get beyond 'tips'! In *Chess for Zebras* I suggest it's not easy to improve as an adult player, but it's possible if you focus on how you know rather than what you know. Good luck!

Ed. – The Moves That Matter *is out now and available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £20.00 or £18.00 for Subscribers.*

Chinese Success – and Hao!

John Saunders reports on the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss, where Wang Hao led home a glittering array of stars vying for a Candidates qualifying place

A small hamlet called Mount Murray in the Isle of Man was the improbable location for one of the strongest tournaments in chess history in October. More than one hundred super-GM aspirants to the world title – plus the title-holder and his 2018 challenger – assembled for the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss tournament, offering a qualifying place in the 2010 FIDE Candidates tournament and a sumptuous $433,000 in prizes.

There has never been a tournament quite like it before. Perhaps the nearest to it in format were the 1990 Manila Interzonal where 64 players slugged it out to produce 11 qualifiers for the 1991-93 Candidates matches, and the 1993 Biel Interzonal, where 73 players vied for ten Candidates slots. These two Swiss-paired tournaments were broadly similar to the 2019 competition in terms of relative strength in depth, allowing for the fact that the world's elite in those days were rated around 100 points less than they are today, but the main difference in 2019 was that the rich cake of super-GMs had two delectable cherries on top – Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana – neither of whom had a stake in the qualification process, but were attracted by the prospect of the fulsome prize fund, with the winner to receive $70,000.

Back in the 1990s world champions did not lower themselves to competing in world title qualifiers, but they might have felt differently had the prize funds been as generous as in the 2019 FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss, which, like the past five Isle of Man Internationals, enjoyed the patronage of the Scheinberg family. There were some murmurings on social media about the ethics of already-qualified players taking part in a world title eliminator – Carlsen and Caruana themselves expressed surprise that they were allowed to take part – but it made excellent sense.

For one thing, the Isle of Man hosts and organisers had earned the chance to maintain their own tournament's tradition and prestige. The addition of Carlsen and Caruana to the line-up contributed hugely to this end – they had both taken part in the 2017 Isle of Man tournament – as did the addition of further wild cards in the form of women, junior, British and local players, so as to reflect the pattern set over the past five iterations of the event and retain its character. I think the good sense of this decision was reflected in the excitement and newsworthiness of what was to be a spellbinding event.

A determined force and a calm hand on the tiller. Over the past five years Alan Ormsby's fine organisation has helped the Isle of Man to become one of the world's leading tournaments.

The Comis Hotel was the tournament venue, situated four miles south of the Isle of Man's capital, Douglas. This modern, well-appointed hotel, which forms a country club in tandem with the golf course that surrounds it, set in rolling countryside with distant views of hills, proved an unusual but ideal location for FIDE's new-format world championship eliminator. It didn't have capacity for all 154 competitors, with some being bussed in daily from a larger hotel in Douglas, but it provided a restful ambience for the event.

There were two playing areas, with the top 30+ boards having a smaller but airier hall, with generous views over the golf course and surrounding countryside, the rest being housed in a larger space but with less natural light. As at the Gibraltar tournament, which is also divided between two playing areas, some of the less eminent players made it their goal to score enough points to play alongside the superstars on the top boards, but only to boost their own sense of achievement as playing conditions were fine in both areas. Players were untroubled by spectators as they were not admitted into the playing areas (though there was space for 20-30 locals and visitors to sit in on the commentary in the broadcasting suite), and the players themselves could not return to the playing area once their own games were finished. Hence conditions for play were ideal, and efficiently maintained by the team of arbiters led by the genial Alex Holowczak.

Round one was unlike most other round ones of Swiss tournaments that I have reported on in these pages, and my habitual moan about the tedium of reporting on droves of weak players being massacred by the strong would be out of place were I to repeat it here. The adjective 'Grand' in the tournament title was not there for nothing. We didn't even need the random pairing experiment of the 2017 Isle of Man tournament (since outlawed by FIDE) to spice things up, as the conventional pairings were enough to ensure extremely tough pairings for all the superstars. Magnus Carlsen had to fight tooth and nail to stay in the game with 2636-rated Ukrainian GM Yuriy Kuzubov, and

he was luckier still to win after Kuzubov overstepped the time limit.

M.Carlsen-Y.Kuzubov
Round 1
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 c6 7 ♕c2 h6 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♗g3 ♘h5 10 0-0-0 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 ♘b6 12 e4 ♗e6 13 ♗d3

The Spanish GM David Anton Guijarro proceeded with 13 exd5 in a game in 2018.

13...♕f6 14 e5 ♕g7 15 ♘h2 g4

Attempting to frustrate a white kingside pawn advance, but it cedes use of f4 to White.

16 ♘e2 0-0-0 17 ♘f4 ♕g5 18 ♔b1

Re-routing the knight with 18 ♘f1 is the engine's choice.

18...h5 19 ♘f1 ♖h6

Otherwise White cuts off the rook's defence of h5 with ♗h7.

20 ♘e3 ♔b8 21 ♘f5

21 a4 looks more natural.

21...♗xf5 22 ♗xf5 h4 23 ♘e2 hxg3 24 ♖xh6 ♗xh6 25 ♘xg3 ♘c4 26 ♗d3 ♘d2+!

This looks a bit surprising and maybe Carlsen underestimated it.

27 ♔a1 ♕f4 28 ♘f5 ♗g5

White cannot do anything to defend the f2-pawn so he tries to do something similar with his own knight. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

29 ♘d6 ♕xf2 30 ♕c3 ♖d7 31 ♕b4

It looks as though White should have counterplay on the queenside, but Black has calculated that he can deal with it. However, the time he had expended in reaching this conclusion was starting to matter as much as the position on the board.

31...a5!

Not 31...♕xg2 when 32 ♘xb7 secures a draw for White, which would have been a better result than the way it turned, but of course at the time Black was playing for a win.

32 ♕xa5

After 32 ♕b6 Black can now proceed with 32...♕xg2.

32...♕xd4 33 ♖xd2

33...♗xd2

Much better, but harder to calculate in severe time trouble, was 33...♕xe5 when Black's extra material should tell.

34 ♕xd2 ♕xe5 35 ♘f5 c5 36 ♗b1!?

It's difficult to know quite how to annotate this move. The engines aren't keen, but perhaps Carlsen was trying to exploit his opponent's time trouble with some Muhammed Ali-style 'rope-a-dope' luring the opponent forward and hoping for him to overreach.

36...d4 37 ♕d3 ♕d5 38 ♕g3+ ♔a7 39 ♕xg4 d3

This looks scary for White, but 39...c4 might have kept Black's initiative intact.

40 ♘e3

Even the humblest woodpusher knows that the knight is the best piece to blockade a fast-running pawn.

40...♕d4 41 ♕f3 d2 42 ♘d1

White's ringside arrangement isn't pretty, but at the moment there's not much choice.

42...♕c4 43 ♕e3 ♖d4 44 a3 ♕c1 45 ♕b3 ♖d6

One starts to wonder whether Black has failed to reattune himself to a change in circumstances. The prospects of a win have evaporated and it's time to bale. Once again Kuzubov was drifting into time trouble.

46 ♔a2 c4 47 ♕f3 ♖b6 48 ♗f5 ♖b5? 49 ♕e3+

49 ♗g4 would release the queen to take the f7-pawn, but the text is strong too.

49...♔a6 50 ♗g4 ♕c2 51 ♕c3 ♕b3+ 52 ♔b1 ♖d5 1-0

Black overstepped the time limit. 53 ♕f6+ ♔a7 54 ♕xf7 is not all over, but one would expect Carlsen to prevail eventually.

Carlsen's predecessor as world champion wasn't so lucky. Vishy Anand came up against the Russian GM Evgeniy Najer, who attacked him from the off. The Indian star largely neutralised White's kingside advance, but it remained decidedly tricky. Then, calamity: Anand miscalculated, making a knight move to threaten a piece, but missing the fact that Najer could simply ignore the threat and gain time to super-charge his attack and expose the enemy king. Suddenly Anand was struggling and his attempts to stem the flow of Najer's attack foundered against accurate play from his seasoned 2600+ rated opponent. However, Najer did allow one very difficult combination which would have secured a draw, but the former world champion missed his opportunity to rescue a half point.

Carlsen looks confident, but his now 100+ game unbeaten run almost came to an end against Yuriy Kuzubov, as Magnus found himself in a bunker and did very well to land up putting first.

E.Najer-V.Anand
Round 1
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♗d2 d5 6 ♘f3 b6 7 ♖c1 ♗b7 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 ♘e5

Signalling White's intention to loosen things up and attack.

11...♘xe5 12 dxe5 ♘d7 13 f4 ♘c5 14 ♗b1 d4

Classical play: White attacks on the flank, so Black responds in the centre.

15 ♘b5 d3 16 ♘d4 a5 17 ♕g4 g6 18 f5

White decides to go all-out and it reaps an immediate reward.

18...♘e4??

A total miscalculation. Black can counter White's aggression with ...h5 or ...♕d5, but this lets the light-squared bishop out of its imprisonment, with fatal effects.

19 ♗xd3!

No doubt Black soon woke up to his error, but he has nothing better to do now than continue as in the game.

19...♘xd2 20 fxg6 fxg6

20...♘xf1 21 gxf7+ ♔h8 22 ♘e6 wins the queen.

21 ♗xg6 ♔h8

Stockfish finds 21...♗c8!?, but then 22 ♖f5 ♖xf5 23 ♗xf5+ ♔h8 24 ♗xc8 ♕xc8 25 ♘f5 is still a solid plus for White.

22 ♗xh7 ♖xf1+ 23 ♖xf1 ♗g5 24 ♘f5! ♕d3 25 ♖e1 ♗xe3+ 26 ♔h1 ♗h6

27 ♕g6?

27 ♗g6 wins.

27...♗xg2+! 28 ♔xg2

28 ♕xg2 ♔xh7 29 ♘xh6 ♘f3 is not over.

28...♕d5+?

Black misses his chance. 28...♕f3+! 29 ♔g1 ♕f4! holds the draw.

29 ♔h3!

Unusually, the white king marches up the board to safety. White's main threat is to play ♕f6+, followed by ♕xh6+ and ♕g7 mate, and there is no good way to avert it that doesn't involve ruinous material loss.

29...♕d3+ 30 ♔h4 1-0

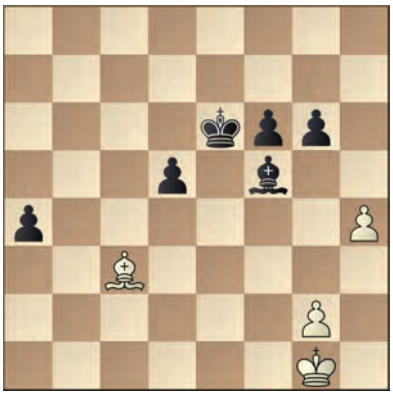
Vishy Anand had a horrible start, but fought his way back into contention until he ran out of energy and lost to Wang Hao in round 10.

There was one other 2700+ casualty, Sam Shankland of the USA, but his opponent, Erwin L'Ami of the Netherlands, is eminent and experienced enough a GM not to be considered a David to anyone's Goliath, hence this hardly counted as a giant-killing. Most of the other surprises were milder, mainly in the form of lower-rated players digging in to take half-points from players rated around 200 points higher.

Another reason why the presence of Messrs Carlsen and Caruana made perfect sense was the opportunity it gave to lesser-known players to have a crack at them and showcase their own talent. As in round two when Carlsen played Black against Alexey Sarana, a 19-year-old Russian already rated 2655. Sarana opted to take on Carlsen's Sveshnikov Sicilian, but rather than choosing Caruana's more circumspect handling of the 2018 world title match, pitched into mainline theory. Play proceeded at breakneck speed as the players entered the endgame before many boards were out of the opening. However, Sarana's preparation was thorough and he was ready for Carlsen's divergence. He later told interviewer Fiona Steil-Antoni that he had analysed the line for himself, with only his computer for company, up to move 24.

That said, to the untutored eye, the position reached, with most of the material hoovered off, still looked innocuous, with a draw the likeliest outcome. Sarana demonstrated that the White's game still possessed venom and it was only ultra-precise defensive play that steered Carlsen's position to safety. It says something for Sarana's ambition that he was more disappointed at not taking his chance than at achieving a draw with a legend of the game.

Five players proceeded to 2/2 (Caruana, Wang Hao, Bu Xiangzhi, Adhiban, Shirov), but it was the last-named, a veteran of the 1990 and 1993 Interzonals mentioned above, who drew the headlines with a near-replica of his remarkable bishop-en-prise-to-a-pawn endgame brilliancy which he pulled off against Veselin Topalov at Linares in 1998. Then it was 47...♗h3!!...



...and this time it was 36...♗a4! against Erwin L'Ami.

Also catching the eye in this round, from the other end of the age spectrum, was 13-year-old Indian GM Raunak Sadhwani, who followed his first-round win against 2662-rated Sjugirov with a draw against Sergey Karjakin, himself one of the most famous prodigies of all time. Only a short time ago, as it seems to my aged self: how *tempus* does *fugit*...

I haven't touched on the British interest yet, partly because the Brits didn't have a particularly auspicious round one, but two of the players merit a mention in round two. Gawain Jones went down to a second defeat against Antoaneta Stefanova, for once having failed to bring off one of his habitual Houdini escapes. IM Brandon Clarke restored English pride with a career-best defeat of Venezuelan GM Eduardo Iturrizaga with Black.

Brandon is not so well known even in his native country, probably because he hasn't played much in the capital and perhaps more because he has been living and working in Australia for some years, but he recently gave notice of his talent in winning the Major Open with a handsome score of 8½/9. His wildcard entry was thanks to his Manx heritage: Brandon's father comes from the Isle of Man.

E.Iturrizaga-B.Clarke
Round 2
King's Indian Defence

1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 g6 3 e4 d6 4 d4 ♗g7 5 h3 0-0 6 ♗e3 c5 7 ♘f3 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 a6 9 g4

IM Brandon Clarke was a late invitee, but caught the eye as he crushed a 2600+ GM with the King's Indian. After the game he took Fiona Steil-Antoni and Chess.com viewers through it.

Rather gung-ho.

9...♘c6 10 g5 ♘h5 11 ♘b3

After 11 ♗e2 Black has the surprising 11...♘f4! exploiting the fact that the e3-bishop is needed to defend the d4-knight.

11...♗e6 12 ♗e2 b5!

This vigorous response gives Black good prospects.

13 c5

13 cxb5 axb5 14 ♗xb5 ♗xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♘e5 offers Black powerful counterplay for the pawn, particularly as the white king has nowhere safe to hide.

13...♗xb3 14 axb3 dxc5 15 ♗xh5 gxh5 16 ♗xc5

16 ♕xh5 ♗xc3+ 17 bxc3 ♕d3 is not to be contemplated.

16...♕c7 17 ♘d5 ♕e5 18 ♕e2

18 ♕c2 is better as 18...♕xg5?! allows 19 ♗e3 when Black has to play 19...♘d4 20 ♕d3 ♕g2, after which 21 0-0-0 gives White a reasonable game.

18...♕xg5 19 ♔f1 ♖fd8!?

Not best, but it sets a trap into which White obligingly falls a few moves down the line.

20 ♖g1 ♕h4 21 ♕f3 ♔h8

22 ♕xf7??

This pawn turns out to be red hot. Instead, 22 ♗e3 holds things together for White.

22...♗xb2 23 ♖a2 ♕xh3+ 24 ♔e2

24 ♖g2 is answered the same way.

24...♕xb3

At first sight the black king is in danger, but it's an illusion as there are no immediate threats. Meanwhile Black can simply gobble up the loose material.

25 ♖a3 ♕c4+ 26 ♖d3 ♕xe4+ 27 ♖e3 ♕c4+ 28 ♔e1 ♖xd5 0-1

After round three the leadership had been whittled down to two players, after Fabiano Caruana beat Alexei Shirov and Wang Hao overcame his fellow countryman Bu Xiangzhi. The gap between them and the world champion increased to a full point after Carlsen conceded another draw to Rustam Kasimdzhanov. Shirov, having delighted us with his *coup de fou* of the second round, was felled by a remarkable *coup de tour* by the brilliant American. Oh, and followed by a *coup de dame*...

A.Shirov-F.Caruana
Round 3

37...d5 38 a3?

38 ♖f1!, turning ♗xc8 into a real threat, is much better.

38...d4 39 ♗xc8

Now 39 ♖f1 ♖d8 would be difficult for White.

39...f1♕ 40 ♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 41 ♔a2 d3 42 ♘e3 ♖f3 43 ♗xf5 ♕xe3 44 ♕a5 ♕e8 45 ♕d5 ♕g8 46 ♗e6 ♕f8 47 h5 ♖e3 48 g6?

A series of difficult but accurately played

The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty openings as played by International Masters and Grandmasters in October

1	⇧	Reti Opening	*210 games*
2	⇩	Queen's Gambit Declined	*172 games*
3	⇧	Caro-Kann Defence	*161 games*
4	⇩	King's Indian Defence	*137 games*
5	⇧	1 d4 ♘f6 sidelines	*119 games*
6	⇧	Sicilian Najdorf	*108 games*
7	⇩	English, 1...e5	*98 games*
8	⇧	Catalan Opening	*97 games*
9	⇩	Nimzo-Indian Defence	*91 games*
10	⇩	Slav Defence	*90 games*
11	⇧	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 d6 sidelines	*78 games*
12	⇩	Ruy Lopez, Berlin Def.	*78 games*
13	⇧	English, 1...e6	*71 games*
14	⇧	English, 1...c5	*71 games*
15	⇧	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 sidelines	*70 games*
16	⇧	English, 1...♘f6	*67 games*
17	⇧	Sicilian Kan	*67 games*
18	⇩	Queen's Indian Defence	*58 games*
19	⇩	1 d4 d5 sidelines	*56 games*
20	⇩	Grünfeld Def. Classical	*51 games*

3,378 games played between 1-31 October where both players were rated over 2400 Elo

Source: TWIC.
Compiled by *HIARCS 14.*

In association with
HIARCS Chess Explorer - hiarcs.com
and *The Week in Chess* -
theweekinchess.com

moves by both players comes to an end here. 48 ♕d7, preparing to answer 48...d2 with 49 ♗b3, was the safest course for White.

48...d2 49 ♗f7 ♖e2 50 ♕d3 ♖h2 51 ♕f3

Now Black shows his class with a couple of ultra-precise moves:

51...♖g2!!

Brilliantly exploiting the immobility of the queen, chained to the defence of the pawn's promotion square.

52 ♕d3

'And, for my next trick...'

52...♕b8!! 0-1

Beautiful. The threat is ...d1♕ followed by mate on b2. If White blocks the b-file with ♗b3 then Black has a deadly skewer with ...♖g3. White has no defence, so resigned.

Luke McShane had made the best start of the Brits and he proceeded to 2½/3 with this pleasant win against a Vietnamese opponent.

Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son -L.McShane
Round 3
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 ♘f6 4 d3 ♗c5 5 0-0 ♘d4 6 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 7 c3 ♗b6 8 ♗a4 0-0 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 d6 11 ♘d2 g5 12 ♗g3 h5!?

12...♗g4 has been played by some top GMs in the last year or two, but this bold thrust is new. It sets White a series of problems and, in the game, he fails to find the right set of answers.

13 h3?

A tricky choice, but White chooses the wrong move. That's not to say that everything is entirely straightforward after 13 h4 as Black has 13...♗g4 14 ♕e1 and then a knight move to put further pressure on White's kingside, but Black's attack looks containable.

13...h4 14 ♗h2 g4 15 ♔h1 ♔h8 16 f4?

Far too optimistic. White should probably try 16 hxg4 ♘xg4 and maybe then 17 f4 ♘xh2 18 ♕h5+ ♔g7 19 ♔xh2, though 19...♗e3 is a bit awkward.

16...gxh3 17 gxh3 ♗xh3 18 ♖f3 ♗g4 19 fxe5 ♘h5

Not 19...dxe5?? 20 ♗xe5 when Black is totally busted.

20 ♕f1

The experienced duo of Anna Rudolf and Daniel King anchored Chess.com's coverage from the Comis Hotel. Many of you must have tuned in for McShane-Caruana or Howell-Grischuk.

20...♕g5!

When playing 16 f4, White must have envisaged something like 20...♗xf3+ 21 ♕xf3 ♕g5 22 d4 when he has the glimmer of an attack for his sacrificed material, but the text is much stronger than the capture on f3. One attractive aspect of McShane's play is the way he repeatedly develops his pieces with gain of tempo, here attacking the loose knight on d2 which is obliged to move.

21 ♘c4 f5! 22 ♘xb6

If 22 exf6 ♗xf3+ 23 ♕xf3 ♖xf6 and it is clear Black's counterattack will crash through.

22...axb6

Now the a4-bishop is attacked and has to move.

23 ♗d7 ♗xf3+

Finally capturing the hapless rook on f3. The game is effectively over.

24 ♕xf3 fxe4 25 ♕g4 ♘g3+ 26 ♗xg3 ♕xg4 27 ♗xg4 hxg3 28 exd6 ♖f4 29 ♗e6 cxd6 30 dxe4 ♖xe4 31 ♗d5 ♖e2 32 b4 ♖f8 33 ♖d1 ♖f4 0-1

In round four the two leaders, Caruana and Wang Hao, drew which allowed two other players to join them. One was Luke McShane, who used his heavy pieces to defeat Baskaran Adhiban in some style. The other was 19-year-old Iranian GM and 2018 world junior champion Parham Maghsoodloo who won a very nice opposite-coloured bishop ending, despite not having any extra pawns. This was in sharp contrast to the next board, where Nikita Vitiugov was unable to win another opposite-coloured bishop endgame despite being two pawns to the good. That's no criticism of Vitiugov as there was no win to be found by engines either, but much credit to the Iranian for finding all the right moves.

The major spectacle of the round as far as spectators were concerned was Magnus Carlsen's game against Vladislav Kovalev. The 25-year-old Belorussian GM was another relatively unknown player to grasp a chance to raise his profile with a game against the world champion – and it was so nearly a win. Things started to go awry for Carlsen when he allowed his opponent to get a passed d-pawn to d6 and then support it with a queen on d5. His situation went from bad to worse with some more inaccurate moves as the pawn came to d7 and Kovalev managed to arrange the rest of his forces to support it and create massive threats.

Carlsen was busted sky high, with his long unbeaten run hanging by a thread, but two factors were on his side: his Houdini-like ability to escape when all is lost and, more importantly, his opponent's dire clock handling. Eventually they reached a position where Kovalev needed a reasonable amount of time to figure out how to exploit the advantage conferred by his monstrous pawn, but he only had seconds available. Carlsen tried to lure him into two different threefold repetition scenarios. Kovalev avoided both, but at too great a positional cost and at the time control it was clear that the great Norwegian shark was off the hook and heading for open water, bloodied but unbeaten.

Kovalev's disconsolate face towards the end of the game told the story of the one that got away. Still, Carlsen could hardly be happy either, having made a decidedly mediocre start to the tournament and with his main rival still a point ahead of him.

The strength in depth of the tournament, and also the widespread nature of chess expertise in the modern world, were perfectly exemplified in this round when Sergei Movsesian

A draw against the world champion is rarely seen as a bad result, but Vladislav Kovalev was still disconsolate at the board, the effect of his time trouble having helped Carlsen to wriggle free.

lost to the 20-year-old Madagascan IM Fy Antenaina Rakotomaharo. Only a few years ago the Armenian player was rated 2751, but at this stage of the tournament he had scored just one draw from four games.

Round five saw draws amongst the four leaders, but one of those draws, McShane-Caruana, was the showpiece of the round with a narrative almost replicating that of Kovalev-Carlsen in round four. As with Carlsen on the previous day, Caruana didn't seem to be on his game and he drifted into a difficult position, a pawn down and without much scope for activity. Engines soon flagged up a large advantage to the Englishman, but there is no such thing as a won position when you're facing one of these 2800+ rated leviathans. The endgame still looked promising, but Fabi, like Magnus, is a phenomenal defender. We must remind ourselves that these guys played a world championship match during which neither could beat the other in a classical game. Caruana steered his way through the next 20+ moves without missing a beat [*Ed. – I'm delighted to report that Luke himself will be annotating his humdinger of a game with Fabiano for our Christmas issue*].

The group on 3½/5 swelled to seven as Grischuk, Fedoseev and Shirov all won, against Cheparinov, Wojtaszek and Sargissian respectively. Carlsen took the opportunity to move within half a point of the seven leaders by defeating Surya Ganguly.

Round six took us beyond the halfway mark and once again Fabiano Caruana and Wang Hao had wrested the joint lead for themselves. Caruana looked to be in cruise control against Fedoseev, while Wang Hao defeated Luke McShane. I expect that many of Luke's British fans feared the worse for him, wondering if he would be able to put behind him the disappointment of only drawing with Caruana via an overwhelming position and the tiredness of a long and unsuccessful game. So it proved: though McShane's attempts to chip away at Wang Hao's big centre were largely successful, he missed a couple of ways to level the game in the later middlegame. Wang Hao's play in the latter stages was flawless and quite in the Carlsen/Caruana class.

The pairings were kind to Magnus Carlsen, giving him a second successive White and he took full advantage, defeating Alexei Shirov in a beautiful, subtle game. Shirov played the Petroff, albeit in a somewhat un-Petroff-like way. In many ways this was classic Carlsen, nursing his opening edge and waiting to see if his opponent compromised his position in any way. The star move of the game for me was 33 ♕c3! which doesn't threaten anything in itself, but is a sort of meta-zugzwang, while tying up the loose ends of White's game and squeezing Black into spoiling his position.

Without 33 ♕c3!, Carlsen's planned transition into a queen ending would likely not have worked so he must have envisaged it when he played 28 c3. It allowed him to secure a pawn advantage and that made all the difference. The more I look at this game, the more I think it is a little gem. I was tempted to compare it with Capablanca and Fischer, but Carlsen needs no comparison with others as he is already firmly established as one of the great stylists.

M.Carlsen-A.Shirov
Round 6
Petroff Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 d4 ♘xe4 4 ♗d3 d5 5 ♘xe5 ♘d7 6 ♘c3 ♘xe5 7 dxe5 ♘xc3 8 bxc3 ♗e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4 f5 11 ♗e3 c5

11...♗e6 12 a4 ♕d7 13 ♕f3 was played in Vitugov-So, FIDE World Cup 2019, just a few weeks before this game, which White also won.

12 ♗e2 ♗e6 13 ♗f3 ♕d7 14 a4 ♖ad8 15 ♕e2 ♕c7 16 ♖fb1 b6 17 ♖d1 g5

Shirovian, and also probably best. White has a slight edge.

18 h3 ♖d7 19 ♖d2 ♖fd8 20 ♖ad1 gxf4 21 ♗xf4 d4 22 ♕f2

22...♔h8

One wonders if both players saw the almighty cheapo after 22...dxc3? 23 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 24 ♕g3+ ♔h8 and now (drum roll) 25 ♖d6!!. Maybe not, but their instincts probably made them reject such a risky plan without analysing too far.

23 ♔h1 ♕c8

A similar cheapo occurs after 23...dxc3? 24 ♖d6!.

24 ♔h2 ♖g8

Shirov tires of wriggling on a hook and seeks an active counter.

25 cxd4 cxd4 26 ♖xd4!

Carlsen is not bothered about giving up the exchange since he will gain a prize pair of passed pawns by way of compensation.

26...♖xd4 27 ♖xd4!

Much better than 27 ♕xd4 ♖d8 28 ♕f2 ♖xd1 29 ♗xd1 ♕c3 when White is on the back foot and struggling to find a winning plan.

27...♗c5 28 c3

Carlsen decides his line is good enough to do the job, but a more forcing option was available: 28 ♕h4! ♗xd4 29 ♕f6+ ♖g7 30 ♗h6 ♕g8 31 ♗xg7+ ♕xg7 32 ♕d8+, picking up the loose bishop and securing a comfortably won endgame.

28...♗xd4 29 cxd4 ♕d7 30 ♕d2 ♗d5 31 e6 ♕xe6 32 ♗e5+ ♖g7

33 ♕c3!

Carlsen is in Capablanca mode, doing just enough to secure the win without bothering his head with tactics.

33...♗xf3 34 ♕xf3 ♕e8 35 ♕xf5 ♔g8 36 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 37 ♕g5+ ♔f8 38 ♕f4+ ♔e7 39 ♕e4+ ♔f8 40 ♕xh7 ♕xa4 41 ♕f5+ ♔g7 42 ♕e5+ ♔f7 43 h4 1-0

Levon Aronian was on 3½/5 going into the sixth round and beat Alexei Dreev in 26 moves. It was an odd game, with some anodyne play from the Armenian in the opening, but followed by some wild complications and a real fizzer of a move to finish it off.

Nikita Vitiugov has garnered a good deal of sympathy and admiration in the wake of his unfortunate elimination by Armageddon from the FIDE World Cup, followed by a gracious and positive tweet thanking fans for their support, so it was good to see him back in contention for a Candidates place in the Isle of Man. In round six he won an excellent game against Matthias Bluebaum, which Daniel King presents in this month's *How Good is Your Chess?* feature.

By round seven, which followed the rest day, the tournament was becoming tougher than ever, with the top-rated/in-form players slugging it on the top boards, but with wins becoming ever harder to come by. Into the sixth hour of play in this round it looked as if all 12 top boards would end in draws. Rather like watching the 2018 world championship match multiplied by twelve. However, finally one of the players tired and went wrong: Wang Hao erred in a difficult ending and his opponent, Levon Aronian, replaced him as joint tournament leader with Fabiano Caruana, who drew a tough battle with Alexander Grischuk.

Carlsen was a pawn down against Kirill Alekseenko, and later a pawn up, but he couldn't overcome the solid Russian's defences. Alekseenko, a recent newcomer to the 2700 level, will be a new name to many, but he was another young player who raised his profile in the Isle of Man, going through unbeaten for a 2834 TPR.

As well as reporting on the leaders, we should perhaps consider some of the big names not doing so well at this relentlessly tough tournament. Daniil Dubov, rated 2699 and the reigning world rapid champion, was languishing on 2½/7 at this stage, having failed to win a single game. Still, he was able to score 3/4 from his final four games, raising his TPR to 2560 and only shedding 20 rating points. His troubles in the Isle of Man haven't affected him since: he scored 5½/7 in the European Team Championship for a team gold medal and, at the time of writing, was doing well in the Hamburg FIDE Grand Prix event.

Another Russian of whom much was expected (by me, anyway, having seen him up close winning the Gibraltar Masters earlier in the year) was Vladislav Artemiev. He won his first-round game in the Isle of Man, but couldn't add to his tally in the subsequent ten rounds, also finishing on 5½/11. Bu Xiangzhi, similarly, started with 2/2, but couldn't win another game, subsiding to 50%. Another top player who won't remember the Grand Swiss with any fondness was 2018 U.S. Champion Sam Shankland who could only manage 5/11 for a TPR of 2542 and the inevitable loss of his 2700 status.

Round eight featured a draw between the two leaders, Caruana and Aronian, which opened the door to those who would challenge them. Just one player managed to squeeze through the aforesaid portal to reach 6/8, namely the Spanish GM David Anton Guijarro who won an exemplary game against Alexander Grischuk. This was partly a victory for shrewd opening preparation, but needed nerve in carrying it through. Nicknamed 'El Niño' ('the boy') by his friends, the young Spaniard has an aggressive and gritty style which belies his boyish looks.

D.Anton Guijarro-A.Grischuk

Round 8

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 ♗c5 4 ♘c3 c6 5 ♘f3 e4 6 ♘h4 d5

This is a deliberately provocative line of play for White as the knight on h4 looks vulnerable to a ...g7-g5 thrust, but it is better than it looks for White.

7 cxd5 cxd5

The immediate 7...g5 is answered by 8 d4 and everything works out in White's favour.

8 d3

Covering the threat on g5 and chipping away at Black's overextended pawn centre.

8...♘g4 9 0-0 g5

Grischuk puts White's plan to the test.

10 d4

This is a new move, played quickly, perhaps to signal to his opponent that he has been lured into a prepared line.

10...♗e7

10...gxh4? 11 dxc5 hxg3 12 hxg3 ♗e6 13 f3 leaves Black well behind in development and with a major problem on the dark squares.

11 h3

11...♘xf2?

Grischuk had a long think about this. The more sedate 11...gxh4 12 hxg4 ♘c6 is playable, though White can claim a small edge after 13 ♗f4. Another possibility is 11...♘h6, planning to round up the trapped h4-knight later on after the h6-knight has been defended. Instead of these ideas Grischuk starts going off the rails quite alarmingly.

12 ♖xf2 gxh4 13 ♕b3 hxg3 14 ♖f4!

White has given up two pawns, but he's way ahead in development and with a file and diagonal on which to attack. The usefulness of the rook on f4 becomes later on, suggesting that White had it worked out in his laboratory at home.

14...♘c6 15 ♕xd5 f5?

Overlooking what is a pretty obvious sacrificial reply, reminiscent of the sort of punishment dished out in various lines of open games that you can find in ancient game anthologies. It's incredible that a player as strong and sophisticated as Grischuk should wind up in a mess like this. That said, after 15...♕xd5 16 ♘xd5, Black will have difficulty dealing with various threats. If 16...♘xd4 17 ♘c7+ ♔d8 18 ♘xa8 ♘xe2+ 19 ♔f1 ♘xf4 20 ♗xf4 White wins. Black must have been relying on 15...f5 to shore up his defences, but it doesn't take a genius to find White's coming idea.

16 ♗xe4! fxe4?

Black should have tried to defend with 16...♕xd5 17 ♗xd5 ♗d7, etc, as accepting the piece sacrifice looks hopeless. Grischuk is unrecognisable in this game.

17 ♕h5+ ♔d7 18 ♗e3!

The capture of the e-pawn can wait: White wants to bring another piece into play, and possibly get ready to deploy the a1-rook. Winning is a straightforward process now.

18...♕g8 19 d5 ♘d8 20 ♘xe4 ♕g6 21 ♕e5 ♘f7 22 ♖xf7 ♕xf7 23 ♖c1 ♖f8 24 ♗g5 1-0

Carlsen wasn't given much chance of joining the leaders by Wang Hao who soon snuffed the life out of the game for a draw. Elsewhere veterans Vishy Anand and Boris Gelfand maintained their Candidates hopes by beating Fedoseev and Zhang Zhong respectively.

The round also featured an incident like the famous one at the 1955 Gothenburg Interzonal when three Soviet GMs found themselves playing an identical line of play against three Argentinians at the same time. There were just the two identical twins here in the Isle of Man rather than triplets, but the effect was similar, and the games drew much attention from spectating GMs in the room and the online audience. The games in question were immediately adjacent to each other on boards seven and eight – Alexei Shirov versus Yu Yangyi and Sergey Karjakin against Aleksey Dreev.

Sergey Karjakin later attempted to explain what happened in what order in a playful tweet: "Funny accident today when we had the same position like Shirov against Yu. I actually confused the moves with g4, forgetting my own game against...Yu! So in the end Shirov followed me, I followed Shirov,

Dreev followed Yu, and Yu believed in my preparation! That is how it works," topped off with a laughter emoji.

S.Karjakin-A.Dreev
Round 8
Sicilian Four Knights

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 ♘xc6 bxc6 7 e5 ♘d5 8 ♘e4 ♕c7 9 f4 ♕b6 10 c4 ♗b4+ 11 ♔e2 f5 12 exf6 ♘xf6 13 ♗e3 ♕d8 14 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 15 ♕xd6 ♗b7 16 g4?

A new move by Karjakin, who had forgotten that he had played 16 ♖d1 ♖c8 17 g4 in the course of beating Yu Yangyi at the FIDE World Cup in 2015. Shirov followed suit, forgetting that this was a board game and not a card game.

16...c5!

The reason why 16 g4 was bad was because this move now threatens the rook in the corner, so White has to deal with that problem rather than taking the pawn. Yu Yangyi put it on the board before Dreev. The latter said later he was originally intending to play something else, but was "confused" when he saw that the Chinese GM had played it.

17 ♖g1 ♘e4 18 ♕e5?

Shirov was the first to play this, with Yu Yangyi replying quickly, so Karjakin played along.

18...♕h4?

All four participants in this unofficial four-hander game overlooked the power of 18...0-0! with terrible threats, beginning with ...d6 and presently ...♖f6, should White snatch the e-pawn: for example, 19 ♗g2 d6 20 ♕h5, saving the queen, but now 20...♕b6! 21 b3 a5 and Black has a positionally won game.

19 ♗g2 ♕xg4+

At this point the Shirov-Yu Yangyi game was moved to the secondary playing hall while Karjakin-Dreev remained in situ. The games immediately deviated.

20 ♔d3!

Shirov played 20 ♗f3, which the engines prefer for some reason, but it actually works out worse than the text move played by Karjakin: 20...♘c3+ 21 ♔d3 ♕xf3 22 ♔xc3 ♖g8 23 ♖g3 ♕c6 24 ♗xc5 0-0-0 25 ♗d6 ♗a6 26 b3 ♔b7 27 ♖d1 ♖c8 28 ♖xg7? (allowing Black a rather obvious counter-attacking sequence; instead, 28 ♕d4 might have kept up the pressure) 28...♖xg7 29 ♕xg7 ♗xc4! 30 ♔b2 ♗e2 and Shirov-Yu Yangyi was drawn in 44 moves.

20...♘f2+

20...d6 might be better, but 21 ♗h1 dxe5 22 ♖xg4 exf4 23 ♖xf4 0-0-0+ 24 ♔c2 ♘f6 25 ♗xc5 still looks promising for White.

21 ♗xf2 ♗xg2 22 ♗xc5 ♖c8?

After this White's grip on the dark squares looks decisive. 22...♕f3+ 23 ♔d2 0-0-0 24 ♗xa7 is a better defence, but still looks bad for Black.

23 ♖ae1 ♔f7 24 ♖e2 ♕f3+ 25 ♗e3 d6 26 ♕d4 e5 27 ♕xa7+ ♔e6 28 ♖gxg2 ♖xc4 29 ♔xc4 ♖c8+ 30 ♔b4 ♕e4+ 31 ♗d4 1-0

Like the world champion, Fabiano Caruana had to be at his instructive best to get the better of Alexei Shirov, who remains a force to be reckoned with and brightens up any tournament.

Though the laws of the game are specific on the subject of advice, these situations where games follow the same course for a significant number of moves and over an equally significant period of time (in this case, more than an hour) represent a grey area, but it is one in which the arbiters can act in order to ensure players are not disturbed by their neighbours' game and by the unwonted levels of attention that they can attract.

To remedy the situation, chief arbiter Alex Holowczak took the decision to separate the games by moving Shirov-Yu Yangyi to the secondary playing area. Having done so, it was noticeable that the two games diverged immediately. Looking closer at the moves, engines indicate that, rather than scoring 1½/2, the line chosen by mistake by Karjakin and then adopted by Shirov should have scored 0/2 with best play. A veritable comedy of errors, but it was the player who initiated the clowning, Karjakin, who had the last laugh.

In round nine the top two seeds finally clashed. In 2017 Carlsen beat Caruana with Black in the Isle of Man, since when they had drawn all their classical encounters, but in 2019 neither could break the streak of indecisive results. Caruana appeared to be in difficulties in the opening, spending an inordinate amount of time contemplating his ninth move, but he found a way to emerge with counterplay and, before long, perpetual check. Levon Aronian was also held to a draw, by David Anton Guijarro. This enabled Hikaru Nakamura, who beat Kovalev, to tie with Caruana, Aronian and Anton Guijarro with two rounds remaining and seemingly set the scene for one of his typical Gibraltar grandstand finishes.

Wang Hao came within an ace of joining the leaders, but missed what would have been an exquisite endgame win against Vitiugov. Round nine proved to be the graveyard of the hopes of two elder statesmen, Boris Gelfand and Alexei Shirov, who lost to Maxim Matlakov and Alexander Grischuk respectively. English hopes, though, were given a boost when David Howell defeated former FIDE champion Rustam Kasimdzhanov for his second successive win to reach '+3' and overtake Luke McShane who was now on 5½/9 after drawing with Wesley So.

Round nine was a watershed for younger wildcard entries aiming for GM norms. Three players achieved their final norm. Raunak Sadhwani didn't so much achieve a norm as smash it out of the park. He merely needed to show up to play to qualify, but he exceeded the requirement in style by beating the formidable Russian GM Alexander Motylev, who, at 2651, was the lowest-rated opponent the 13-year-old had faced in the tournament to that point, reaching a TPR of 2721. Germany's Vincent Keymer, a month away from his 15th birthday, had been hunting down his final norm for about a year, but did it in some comfort, not meeting anyone rated below 2634 and scoring 4/9. Denmark had cause to celebrate their newest grandmaster, Jonas Buhl Bjerre, aged 15, who only lost one game in nine to Wesley So for a TPR so far of 2665.

The penultimate, tenth round saw a major bloodletting on the top boards, apart from Nakamura-Aronian, and a sole leader finally emerging in the shape of Fabiano Caruana on 7½/10. The world number two gradually outplayed Anton Guijarro in the endgame and extinguished Spanish hopes of a title candidate in 2020. The second score group on '+4' swelled to seven with Nakamura and Aronian joined by Magnus Carlsen, Wang Hao, Kirill Alekseenko, Nikita Vitiugov and David Howell, completing the squad of eight who would contest the single Candidates slot and

the major prizes in the final round.

Carlsen prevailed against Matlakov, but once again the world champion made heavy weather of it, missing what looked like a certain mating attack and having to eke the win in a problematic endgame which looked like a fortress to the untrained eye. His predecessor as world champion, Vishy Anand, saw his own chances of mounting another title challenge dashed when he succumbed to Wang Hao. The Indian superstar had recovered well from his first-round loss, but fatigue seemed to catch up with him as he went badly astray and lost surprisingly quickly.

Kirill Alekseenko did extremely well to defeat his compatriot Sergey Karjakin after the former title challenger had gone wrong in the opening and was forced to surrender a piece for pawns to stay in the game. As always, Karjakin proved hard to grind down, but Alekseenko managed it in 89 moves.

David Howell against Alexander Grischuk was billed as the battle of the time-trouble kings and did not disappoint. Howell opened patriotically with the English. Grischuk equalised, but lost time with a rook manoeuvre which allowed Howell to regain the initiative and take a firm grip of the queenside. Thereafter much of Howell's battle was with his clock rather than his opponent as his myriad English fans underwent the usual torture of wondering whether he could make the time control, but eventually he got things under control and reeled in the point.

The final act. Having done brilliantly to defeat Bluebaum, Kasimdzhanov and Grischuk in a row, David Howell found Wang Hao a step too far as the amiable Chinese qualified for the Candidates.

D.Howell-A.Grischuk
Round 10
English Opening

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 b6 3 g3 c5 4 ♗g2 ♗b7 5 0-0 e6 6 ♘c3 ♗e7 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♕xd4 0-0 9 ♖d1 ♕c8 10 ♗f4 ♖d8 11 ♘b5 d5 12 cxd5

Wesley So continued 12 ♘e5 against Laurent Fressinet in a rapid game in 2016 and went on to win.

12...♖xd5 13 ♕a4 ♘a6 14 ♘d6

Securing the two bishops, but at some positional cost.

14...♗xd6 15 ♗xd6 ♘c5 16 ♕a3 ♘ce4 17 ♖dc1 ♕e8 18 ♗b4 a5 19 ♗e1 ♖ad8 20 ♖c2 h6 21 ♖ac1 ♖d1 22 ♕b3

22...♖1d6?

They always tell you "Having played 'A', you must play 'B'", thus 22...♖xc1 23 ♖xc1 ♘d7, etc, but maybe on looking deeper into the position, Grischuk might have been put off by 24 ♘d4 when it looks like White will emerge with a slight edge. However, moving the rook back, more or less to where it came from, proves much worse.

23 ♘e5!

Black's problem now is that he doesn't have many moves, which is just the sort of thing to make time trouble's problems even worse. Note that the knight cannot go to c5 as it would be snapped off, followed by the loose bishop on b7.

23...a4 24 ♕b4 ♗a8

The threat was ♖c7, forking the bishop and the pawn on f7.

25 ♘c4 ♖d4 26 ♕xb6

That's a free pawn, so White is winning, but both players were taking far too long over their moves. For the spectators, it was like watching two people wading through treacle, or witnessing that legendary Borg-McEnroe tie-breaker all those years ago. Commentator Daniel King was starting to agonise in sympathy (or was it despair?) with his fellow English GM. I'm sure many people at home were exclaiming "C'mon, David!" at their computer screens.

26...e5 27 ♕c7

My principal thought watching this was 'Don't get your queen trapped, David!', but it's the right move.

27...♘d7 28 f3 ♘ec5 29 ♗f2 ♘e6 30 ♕a7 ♖d5 31 ♕xa4

Now, if I'd played that second gratuitous pawn snatch in time trouble, I'm sure there would have been some awful tactic come crashing down on the board to snuff me out. But it's OK.

31...♘d4 32 ♖d2 ♕e6 33 e4 ♖c5 34 ♗xd4

That's one less knight to worry about forking our hero. But we're not done yet...

34...exd4 35 ♖xd4

He snatches a third pawn. The cruel goddess of chess would never let us ordinary mortals get away with such greed, but it's still OK.

35...♗c6 36 ♕d1

Phew! Only now, with the queen back home, out of reach of sneaky knights and treacherous bishops, could Howell fans start to breathe more easily and warm feelings creep back into icy feet. Watching chess is a nerve-wracking business.

36...♖b8 37 b3 h5 38 h4 ♕e7 39 ♘d6 1-0

A tremendous success for the English player, equalling or even surpassing his 8/10 for second place at a super-strong Gibraltar Masters in 2015, and giving him a shot at Candidates glory in the last round. Grischuk's hopes of qualifying via the Isle of Man were thus dashed, but he still had the Grand Prix route available to him.

Nikita Vitiugov has been a doughty fighter in many strong Swiss events and he overcame another of the tournament's high-performing young Russians, Aleksandr Rakhmanov, to put himself into contention for major honours in the final round.

So to the last round, with just four boards that mattered in terms of Candidates qualification and major money prizes. They produced just the one decisive result, and it was the winner of this game who annexed the all-important Candidates slot. The top two boards, Nakamura-Caruana and Aronian-Carlsen, finished relatively quickly. The all-American clash was uneventful, with Caruana able to equalise comfortably and ensure at least a share of first prize, leaving Nakamura without hope of qualification given his inferior tie-break. Aronian-Carlsen was a more unbalanced game in which Carlsen gained

some advantage which he might have been expected to try and exploit had he been in more confident form, but he eventually settled for a draw which took him past Ding Liren's 100-game unbeaten streak.

Kirill Alekseenko had the better of things against Nikita Vitiugov, but couldn't find a way to exploit an extra pawn. As it turns out, it would probably have not been good enough to affect the Candidates qualification scenario, but it would have brought the 22-year-old from St Petersburg a share of first place, a handsome prize and his most prestigious result to date had he achieved it. Even so 7½/11 represented a fine performance and, once the tie-break arithmetic had been worked through, made Alekseenko eligible to be chosen as the wild card nominee for the 2020 Candidates' Tournament. Though that doesn't mean he will play, of course, it is a signal honour for the Russian.

The decisive result occurred in the game Wang Hao versus David Howell, but it wasn't the one that English fans had hoped for. Howell went into the game off the back of three successive wins, but he needed an improbable fourth to qualify for the Candidates tournament since the Chinese GM's tie-break was the best of the six contenders. Indeed, Wang Hao later admitted his game plan had been to draw and hope that other games would also end that way. The game seemed to be heading in that direction until Howell played the fateful 18...♗d5?, allowing a terrible pin along the d-file, and thereafter he was given little chance by the Chinese GM, whose face still wore a look of surprise as his opponent later offered his hand in resignation.

Wang Hao-D.Howell
Round 11

18...♗d5??
An aberration instead of 18...♗e6.
19 ♖d1
Of course. "Pins and wins."
19...♗xb7 20 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 21 f4
White has to play this or 21 f3, but not 21 ♗xb6? ♖a8, although even that wouldn't necessarily get Black out of jail after 22 ♗a7.
21...♗xb2 22 ♕a7 ♖d7 23 ♕xb6
And White won in 37 moves.

The top three at the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss pictured alongside the Chief Minister of the Isle of Man, Howard Quayle. Fabiano Caruana doesn't look too amazed, but Wang Hao was delighted to qualify for the Candidates and Kiriil Alekseenko (right) also did very well.

Thus Caruana and Wang Hao tied for first on 8/11, taking home $60,000 each, but to Wang Hao went the additional honour of first place on tie-break and the coveted place in the 2020 Candidates tournament. In the fullness of time it might be considered more significant still that Wang Hao finished first in one of the strongest tournaments of all time, alongside Caruana and ahead of Carlsen, Anand and a long panoply of star names. It wasn't achieved without defeat – he lost to Aronian in round seven – but his opposition included all the top names and he achieved a 2900 rating performance.

Wang Hao's look of bemusement at this unexpected outcome when interviewed afterwards was backed up by his admission that he had been thinking of withdrawing after his involvement in the FIDE World Cup. But all credit to the 30-year-old, whose sunny disposition and modest demeanour make him one of the most popular and well-respected super-GMs amongst his peers. It will be interesting to see how he fares in next year's Candidates tournament. Any of his rivals who underestimate him will do so at their peril.

There was a good competition for the first women's prize of $10,000. Those eligible were heavily outgunned in terms of rating, with the highest-rated female player, Harika Dronavalli, rated 2495, but ranked only 122nd out of the 154 competitors, so it meant a relentless diet of 2600+ rated opponents for the front-runners. In the end the joint first prize winners, taking home $9,000 each, were Harika Dronavalli (India) and Dinara Saduakassova (Kazakhstan) on 50%, achieving TPRs of 2651 and 2648 respectively. Both met opposition composed exclusively of players rated in the 2600s. For Saduakassova it was her first GM norm. Sharing third to fifth prizes were Batkhuyag Munguntuul (Mongolia), Lei Tingjie (China) and Alina Kashlinskaya (Russia) on 5/11. Their respective TPRs are also indicative of solid achievement: 2588, 2578 and 2514.

David Howell was the pick of the English contingent, despite the disappointment of his final game. His score of '+3' and a TPR of 2743 represented a step forward. Luke McShane's failure to clinch a win against Caruana must have been a psychological body blow as he scored only one and a half from his final six games, although this only represented a slight loss of rating overall. Gawain Jones never recovered from a terrible start to the event and shed 27 rating points. However, taking these three results in the round and bearing in mind what happened at the next major event, the European Team Championship in Batumi, which followed a few days later, the stern work-out in the Isle of Man turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the bronze-medal-winning England team.

On a personal note, I would like to express my gratitude to tournament director Alan Ormsby for inviting me to attend the event as photographer and report writer, and to commend him for his key part in the smooth running of a splendid event. Come to think of it, the tournament director has a lot in common with the tournament winners: despite the constant pressures of their respective tasks, I have never seen Messrs Ormsby, Caruana and Wang Hao look anything other than calm and unruffled, with a ready smile for everyone they encounter. A good temperament is clearly vital to success in chess, and not just the playing of the game. A shout-out also to chief arbiter Alex Holowczak and his colleagues, as well as the broadcasting team, for helping make my stay in the Isle of Man a hugely enjoyable one.

***Leading scores*:**

1-2	Wang Hao (China) *placed first on tie-break* Fabiano Caruana (USA)	8/11,
3-8	Kirill Alekseenko (Russia) *3rd on tie-break* Levon Aronian (Armenia), David Anton Guijarro (Spain), Magnus Carlsen (Norway), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Nikita Vitiugov (Russia)	7½

How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King

The FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss tournament, hosted by the Isle of Man and generously sponsored by the Scheinberg family, was a tremendous event. The world champion, Magnus Carlsen, and the world no.2, Fabiano Caruana, were the favourites, with a supporting cast of top-50 players, so that the event could rightfully be described as the strongest Open tournament of the year, and arguably the strongest of all time. The players were attracted by a lavish prize fund, but also the prospect of a place in the Candidates tournament: a golden ticket that could potentially lead to a world title match.

Wang Hao was the surprise winner of that qualification spot. Why 'surprise'? He won the Biel GM tournament in 2012 ahead of Magnus Carlsen, so we know that he is capable of great things, but since then hasn't reproduced the same form consistently. He wasn't included in any of the winning Chinese Olympiad teams and on that evidence seems to be out of favour with the Chinese Chess Federation.

Hao is an engaging individual, always answering questions candidly in interviews, with slightly faltering but understandable English. When asked to comment on his chances in the Candidates tournament, he said smilingly that, first of all, he hoped that he would be able to gather a team of players to support him. And that is somehow so typical of him: he is a little shy, perhaps something of a loner, and has a gentle sense of humour.

With a tournament of this size, there were so many notable stories and performances, as well as heroic individual games, that it is difficult in a short report to include everything. But one thing, apart from Wang Hao's performance, did strike me above all else: the resurgence of Russian players.

Wang Hao and Caruana shared first with 8/11. Then in the group of six players on 7½ points there were two Russians: Kiril Alekseenko, 22 years old, who played very maturely throughout and was always near the top of the standings; and Nikita Vitiugov (32) who just before this had had a tremendous World Cup result. In the group of five players on 7 points there were two Russians: Grischuk and Paravyan; then in the clump of 29 players on 6½ there were seven from Russia – Svidler and Dreev from the older generation, and Karjakin, Fedoseev, Rakhmanov, Oparin, and Matlakov who are all 30 years or under.

The Russians' strength and depth of talent was confirmed by their gold medals in the recently concluded European Team Championships where in the Open section they deployed what was essentially a B-team. Yes, the Indians and Chinese are rising, but the Russians are as strong as ever. Can one of the younger generation break from the pack and make it to the highest level?

The game I have selected for this month's test game is by Nikita Vitiugov who was in with a chance of first place right into the final round at the Isle of Man. His opponent, Matthias Bluebaum from Germany, was having an excellent performance up until this round, but this crushing victory spelled the end of his chances.

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

N.Vitiugov-M.Bluebaum
Isle of Man 2019
English Opening

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 e4

This particular variation of the English forces Black to react quickly. Occasionally I arrive at this position in simultaneous displays and my opponent panics with 3...d6: after 4 d4 you can already chalk up that board. Apart from the game continuation, 3...c5 is possible, as occurred recently in Ding Liren-Radjabov from the final of the World Cup: 4 e5 ♘g8 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 d4 cxd4 7 ♘xd4 ♘xe5 8 ♘db5 – with excellent compensation for the pawn, as pioneered by Miles in the late 1970s and later adopted by Kasparov. If you don't know what you are doing with Black, best left alone.

3...d5 4 e5 d4 5 exf6 dxc3 6 bxc3 ♕xf6 7 d4 e5

The most complicated line. Instead, 7...c5 is more solid, but is well known to give White a comfortable position: 8 ♘f3 cxd4 9 ♗g5 ♕f5 10 cxd4 ♗b4+ 11 ♗d2. The central pawns can be fun.

By breaking with 7...e5, Black will free the bishop on c8, a distinct improvement on the lines with 7...c5 where the queenside doesn't develop for a long time.

8 ♘f3 exd4

9 ♗g5

Four points. All theory so far. This is an important move. If White were to play the reflex 9 cxd4 (*one point*), it is a simple task for Black to equalise: 9...♗b4+ 10 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11 ♕xd2 0-0 12 ♗e2 ♘c6 13 0-0 ♗g4 14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♖ad8 16 d5 ♘e5 with an easy game, Janssen-Socko, Maastricht 2015. The difference between playing 7...e5 and 7...c5 is evident in this variation.

We can forget the alternatives 9 ♕xd4?! ♗e7 and 9 ♘xd4?! ♘c6. Both saddle White with a poor pawn structure for no obvious compensation.

9...♕e6+

Blocking the queen's bishop is not ideal, but the queen does not have an obvious square to land on: for example, 9...♕b6 10 ♖b1 or 9...♕g6 10 ♗d3, and in both cases the initiative continues.

10 ♗e2

One point. The only decent move. Exchanging queens would not help the cause.

10...♗e7

The best move. Black has to catch up with his development.

10...d3, aiming to secure a superior pawn structure, is a bit too clever. 11 0-0 is an even more clever refutation: 11...♗e7 12 ♗xd3 f6 13 ♖e1 ♕f7 14 ♕e2 with a huge initiative.

Finally, 10...f6 11 ♘xd4 ♕f7 12 ♗h6! is also very promising for White. The last variations demonstrate that in this variation piece play and tricky tactics dominate.

11 ♘xd4

Three points. Keeping the initiative, but at

the cost of leaving the doubled c-pawns. In fact, 11 cxd4 (*three points*) is also playable. For example, 11 cxd4 ♗xg5 12 ♘xg5 ♕g6 13 f4 0-0 14 0-0 with complicated play, Navara-Harikrishna, Prague (rapid) 2018.

11 ♗xe7 (*two points*) is less dangerous, but still playable: 11...♕xe7 12 cxd4 0-0 13 0-0, with the easier game.

11...♕e4

12 ♗xe7

Two points. It is tempting to push the queen again with 12 f3 (*one point*), but it doesn't achieve too much: 12...♕e5 14 f4 ♕e3 15 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 16 0-0. The same position as the game, but with the f-pawn advanced two squares. There is no noticeable benefit derived from the advance, so best not to touch the pawn.

12...♕xe7

13 0-0

One point.

13...0-0

With the kings tucked away, the middlegame can begin. At least, it can for White. Black has yet to develop his queenside pieces and that creates the tension in the position: White's queenside pawns are potentially weak, but he has active pieces to compensate. Your task is to convert that activity into a tangible gain before Black's pieces enter the game and stabilise the position.

14 ♖e1

Three points. It isn't yet clear where White's bishop belongs: f3, d3 or somewhere else? But we do know that the rook should be attacking Black's queen. Therefore only *one point* for 14 ♗f3 or 15 ♗d3.

14...♕f6

15 ♗f3

Two points. Making it difficult for Black to develop. *Two points* for 15 ♖b1 as well.

15 ♘b5 (*one point*) isn't quite as effective: 15...♘a6 16 ♕d4 ♗e6 and Black is over the worst.

15...♕a6

This is ambitious and highly provocative. Previous play had seen the more obvious 15...c6, closing the bishop's diagonal. Vachier-Lagrave-Ris, Reykjavik 2013, continued 16 ♕e2 ♘d7 17 ♖ab1 ♘c5 which seems to represent progress for Black: now that the b7-pawn is covered, the queen's bishop can finally emerge. White's task is to keep disrupting, which he did: 18 ♕e3! ♗f5 19 ♘xf5 ♕xf5 20 h3 b6 (or 20...♖ad8 21 ♗g4) 21 ♗xc6 ♖ac8 22 ♗d5, with an extra pawn and a beautiful bishop. It is possible to improve on Black's play, but it is clear that this is not an easy position.

16 ♗d5

Five points. An arresting change in direction. Vitiugov thought for almost half an hour before playing this committal move.

16 ♘b5 (*three points)* also keeps up the pressure on Black's position: 16...♕a5 and now either 17 ♖e7 or 17 ♕d2.

16 ♖e7 (*two points*) also takes the initiative: 16...♕xc4 17 ♕b3 ♕xb3 18 axb3, with enough for the pawn.

16...c6

One cannot reproach Black for inconsistency: he faithfully sticks to his plan, attacking the bishop so he can then go for the queenside pawns. Bluebaum matched his opponent by thinking for around half an hour over this decision, which was all about summoning up the courage to endure the inevitable consequences of White's next move. With 15...♕a6 he put his head into the lion's mouth, and now he gives the beast a tickle.

Funnily enough, 16...c6 is, according to the all-seeing computer, objectively the best move – but to human eyes it verges on the suicidal.

Playing the queen back to where it came from with 16...♕f6 would have taken as much courage as the game continuation – just imagine the thousands of players watching online as you admitted that the switch to a6 was folly. But the queen needs to be next to the king. White would have a pleasant choice of continuations – 17 ♕f3, 17 ♕e2, 17 ♖e3, 17 ♖b1 all spring to mind – but there is no clear way to gain the advantage.

17 ♗xf7+

Three points. There can be no backing down.

17...♔xf7

17...♖xf7 would be disastrous. White's moves are not difficult. Every one of them involves a threat: 18 ♖e8+ ♖f8 19 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 20 ♕f3+ ♔g8 21 ♖e1 ♗d7 22 ♖e7 ♕xc4 23 ♕g3 g6 24 ♕e5, and Black has to give up the queen to avert mate.

18 ♕h5+

One point. The only possible follow-up as 18 ♕f3+ would just lose a tempo.

18...♔g8

19 ♖e8

Three points. The queen needs some support and clearly Mister Rook needs to join the party. The only question is which square it lands on.

Unfortunately, 19 ♖e7 isn't good enough – if Black is switched on. 19...♘d7? loses to 20 ♘f5, but 19...c5! is correct, allowing the queen to slide to the kingside: 20 ♘b5 ♕f6! and the rook has to fall back.

19...♕xc4

Incredibly, this natural move, seeking to reconnect with the kingside, loses the game. Black can still survive the attack if 19...♕a3! is played. Then 20 ♖ae1 ♘d7 21 ♘e6 ♘f6! saves the day.

20 c5 is better, but Black's queen combines attack with defence: 20...♕xc3 21 ♖ae1 ♗d7 22 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 23 ♘f3 ♘a6 24 ♕xh7 ♖e8, and here there is a perpetual, but nothing more: 25 ♕h8+ ♔f7 26 ♕h5+

Nikita Vitiugov made quite an impression at the World Cup and then on the Isle of Man.

♔f8 27 ♕h8+ ♔f7. A long variation, and the starting move 19...♕a3 is far from obvious.

20 ♖xf8+

Two points. The *same score* for 20 ♖ae1, which should transpose.

20...♔xf8

21 ♖e1

Two points. 21 ♕xh7? ♘a6 would slow down the attack: the queen can't do everything on its own.

21...♗d7

22 ♕g5

Four points. A nifty side-step. Something is going to land on e7 or d8. If 22...♘a6 23 ♖e7 wins.

22...♕xc3

23 ♕d8+

One point. 23 ♕e7+ ♔g8 24 ♕d8+ will transpose, but it's slower.

23...♔f7

24 ♘f3

Three points. This holds the rook and prepares the next step. The *same score* for 24 ♖e7+, but only if you realised that 24...♔g6 25 ♘f3 would be necessary.

24...h6

Black is unable to develop his queenside pieces, so the position is utterly lost.

25 ♘e5+

Two points.

25 ♖e7+ (*two points*) also wins, and inevitably the king is hunted to its end. For example, 25...♔g6 26 ♘e5+ ♔h5 27 g4+ ♗xg4 28 ♕e8+ ♔h4 29 ♘g6+ ♔g5 30 h4+ ♔h5 31 ♘f4+ ♔xh4 32 ♘g2+ ♔g5 33 f4+ ♔f5 34 ♕f7+ ♕f6 35 ♖e5 mate. Another long variation, but not too difficult as it all takes place with checks. There were a few deviations possible for Black, but they would not have changed the story.

25 h3 (*two points*) is a safe and pragmatic move. If the calculation of the variation above was a bit much, and a bit scary with a weak back rank, then why not solve that problem? Considering that Black is unable to bring the rook or the knight into play then White can afford to take a time out before pressing forward with the final attack.

25...♔e6

26 ♔f1

Five points. A very cool move, especially considering that White was now running short of time. Protecting the rook sets up a huge discovered check.

Instead, 26 ♘f3+, perhaps aiming to repeat the position and then to think again, is indecisive. Black might even try 26...♔d6, and precise moves are still needed to finish the game.

26...♔d6

And if Black were to try 26...♕xe5, how would you win? Answer on the next line.

A *bonus point* for 27 ♖xe5+ ♔xe5 28 ♕c7+ ♔d5 29 ♕xb7, winning the rook in the corner.

27 ♘xd7

Two points.

Three points for 27 ♘f7+, winning rapidly in all variations. After 27...♔c5 the key follow-up move is 28 ♖e5+ ♔d4 29 ♕h4+ ♔d3 30 ♖e3+.

The game continuation does not jeopardise victory, but it takes a little longer.

27...♕d3+

28 ♔g1

One point.

28...♘xd7

29 ♕xa8

One point. With an extra exchange and Black's king still staggering around in the middle, the win isn't too far away.

29...♕d2

30 ♖f1

One point. The tidiest move. The queen has nothing to attack.

30...♕xa2

31 ♕xb7

One point.

31...♕a4

32 ♕b2

One point. Playing the queen round to attack the king again is sensible, particularly as it threatens the g-pawn on the way. From a practical viewpoint, I also like 32 h3 (*one point*).

32...♘f6

33 ♖e1

One point. The *same score* for 33 ♖a1 or 33 h3.

33...♕a5

34 ♕d4+

One point. The *same score* for 34 ♖a1 and 34 ♖d1+. But in this case, nothing for 34 h3...

34...♘d5

35 ♕e5+ 1-0

One point. At this moment Bluebaum decided he had had enough. If 35...♔d7 36 ♕xg7+, or 35...♔c5 36 ♖c1+ followed by 37 ♕xg7. Black's position is not improving.

A dramatic attack. The fact that there was a possible defence doesn't detract from the play of the attacker; nor should we chastise the loser for not finding the way out. The defence was obscure and at best just resulted in a messy position.

Now add up your points:

0-14	Unlucky
15-29	Average Club Player
30-37	Strong Club Player
38-43	FIDE Master
44-50	International Master
51-59	Grandmaster

Ed. – If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.

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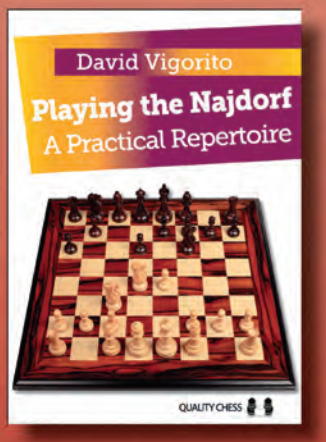

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Coming December 2019

Black Sea Bronze

Kanwal Bhatia reports from the England camp at the European Team Championship

Batumi, on Georgia's Black Sea coast, has played host to a number of top level events recently: the European Individual Championships and the Olympiad were held there last year and, this November, it was the turn of the European Team Championships.

From a personal point-of-view, the European Team Championships is one of my favourite events to take part in. However, various complaints about last year's Olympiad left me a little apprehensive about this trip. Fortunately, it turned out there was no cause for concern, and the organisation, food and accommodation were all commendable. As in previous years, holding the event at an off-season tourist resort ensured good facilities and a peaceful atmosphere, with the tournament venue and hotel located alongside the sea front promenade on the Black Sea.

Hopes were high for the Open team of (in board order) Michael Adams, Luke McShane, David Howell, Gawain Jones and Nick Pert, with Malcolm Pein as captain. Following on from a silver medal in the World Teams earlier this year, they came into the tournament as second seeds behind Russia. However, the difference between the teams was in more than just rating: Russia not only had the higher average, but were supported by two former 2700-rated coaches on site, the use of a hotel suite for meetings and preparation, and even a team masseuse.

With the event coinciding with school and university term-time, our women's team was missing a few regulars and so Jovanka Houska, Katarzyna Toma, Ingrid Lauterbach, Sarah Longson and myself were seeded 24th. Lorin D'Costa was captain and coach. Scotland also participated in the Open section with a team of Alan Tate, Hamish Olson, Graham Morrison, Murad Abdulla and Andrew Muir.

Round one should normally be the smoothest for the top seeds under a Swiss pairing system. However, the opening round is not normally preceded quite so close in time by one of the toughest individual events of the year: the FIDE Grand Swiss had finished just a couple of days beforehand. This was a gruelling 11-round warm-up for many of the top players who journeyed directly from there. The effect of this was clear as Russia drew with Denmark and England with Austria. In both matches it was those nursing metaphorical hangovers from the Isle of Man who fell victim to lower-rated opposition. For Luke, David, Gawain and Jovanka, who would likely be playing the majority of games, there was always going to be a resulting attritional element to Batumi.

That meant the competition had already opened up. While I have seen from previous years that draws do not necessarily penalise teams too harshly in the overall scheme of things, further slip-ups would need to be avoided. One such potential hazard was presented by the round four pairing against seventh seeds Netherlands. Captained by Magnus Carlsen's second, Jan Gustafsson, and with an on-form Anish Giri (who sat out the Grand Swiss after almost certainly qualifying for the Candidates on rating) on top board, this is the kind of hurdle that teams need to consistently overcome in a medal hunt, but which has tripped up English teams in past years. This time, however, Giri was calmly defused by Mickey, leaving Luke to play the only decisive game.

Notes by Luke McShane

I was outplayed in the early part of this game, but sensed the danger before it was too late. At moves 26 and 27 I took risky decisions to sharpen the game. Although my set-up was shaky, it posed serious practical problems and my opponent lost his way in the complications.

E.L'Ami-L.McShane
Netherlands vs England
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♗e2 e5 7 0-0 ♘a6

This is quite a reliable sideline of the King's Indian. In general, the positions are less sharp than those which arise after 7...♘c6 8 d5 ♘e7.

8 ♗e3 c6 9 d5 ♘g4 10 ♗g5 f6 11 ♗h4 ♘h6 12 ♘e1 c5 13 ♘d3 g5 14 ♗g3 f5 15 exf5 ♗xf5

The King's Indian is sometimes considered a 'sharp' opening, but the decisions here are strategic ones. The key question for both players: on what squares do my pieces belong? It is tempting, of course, to bring the knight on h6 towards d4, but another priority is to control the e4-square. At any rate, Erwin handled the next few moves better than me.

15...♘xf5 16 ♘e1 ♘c7 17 ♘c2 ♘e8 18 ♘e4 h6 19 ♘e3 ♘f6 20 ♗d3 ♘xe4 21 ♗xe4 ♕f6 worked out OK for Black in Ragger-Demchenko, Gjakova 2016, drawn after 36 moves.

16 ♗f3 b6 17 ♗e4 ♗d7 18 f3 ♘f5 19 ♗f2 ♘d4 20 a4 ♘c7 21 ♗e3!

Preparing a clever regrouping, as the knight on d3 is not especially well-placed.

21...♖f7 22 ♘f2 ♗f8 23 ♗d3 ♗e7

Playing ...h7-h6 creates some additional weaknesses, which is why I reposted this bishop to protect g5 (and d6).

24 ♘fe4 ♔h8 25 ♘b5!

A good decision. Erwin has manoeuvred effectively, but now his pieces are competing for the e4-square. The dream scenario is one strong piece there, like a knight, facing one sad piece, ideally a black bishop on e7, hence this judicious offer to exchange knights. I ducked it.

25...♘e8 26 ♘xd4 cxd4!

The longer I pondered this decision, the less I liked my position. After either recapture, the passed pawn will be well blockaded. At first, I wanted to capture with the e-pawn, to keep some stability on the queenside, but after 26...exd4 27 ♗d2 ♘g7 28 g4! my knight (and bishops) would be hobbled. Black has no constructive plan, and can only await a break-through with f3-f4. I knew that capturing the way I did left me positionally busted, since a4-a5 and b2-b4/c4-c5 becomes unstoppable in the long run. But in the meantime, Black can create a diversion on the kingside.

27 ♗d2 ♘f6!

My best decision of the game, pitching a pawn to get the attack moving. I knew it wasn't sound, but you don't get any brownie points for losing slowly.

28 ♘xg5 ♖g7 29 f4

This is the best way of dealing with the threat of ...♘f6xd5. 29 ♘e4 ♗f5 30 ♕e2 ♘xe4 31 ♗xe4 ♕d7 gives Black reasonable play on the open g-file and 29 ♘e6 ♗xe6 30 dxe6 ♕g8 31 ♕e2 ♕xe6 is also rather unclear.

29...♕g8 30 ♕e2

30 fxe5 dxe5 31 d6 is good for White, but still a bit messy. I considered 31...♖xg5 (31...♗d8 is better) 32 ♗xg5 ♕xg5, but after 33 ♕f3! ♖e8 34 dxe7 ♔g7 35 ♖ae1 ♖xe7 Black's compensation is clearly insufficient.

30...♖e8 31 ♖ae1

A good move, calmly bringing all the pieces to the relevant sector.

31...♘g4 32 ♔h1?

But this is a bad one. 32 ♘e6 was the move I expected. After 32...♗xe6 33 dxe6 ♕xe6 there is all to play for (but not 33...♗h4? 34 f5 ♗xe1 35 ♖xe1 when White has fantastic play for the exchange). 32 ♘e4 was actually the best move, but it takes a very cool head to be confident that 32...♗h4 33 g3 ♘xh2 34 ♔xh2 ♗xg3+ 35 ♘xg3 ♖xg3 36 ♖f3 exf4 37 ♕f2 refutes the attack. Even here, the move 37...♖e3!? looks menacing from afar, but Black runs out of pieces: 38 ♗xe3! dxe3 39 ♖exe3 fxe3 40 ♕xg3.

32...exf4 33 ♘e6 ♗h4 34 ♗xf4?

This looks like a prudent exchange sacrifice to regain control, but is actually a huge mistake. 34 ♗f5 is equal if you're a computer, and a frazzling mess if you're a human with a few minutes on the clock.

34...♗xe1 35 ♖xe1

Stumbling into the trap. 35 ♕xe1 was slightly less bad, but Black should still win after 35...♗xe6 36 dxe6 ♕xe6.

35...♗xe6 36 dxe6 ♖xe6!!

Erwin was visibly shocked. After 37 ♕xe6 ♘f2+ 38 ♔g1 ♖xg2+ 39 ♔f1 ♖g1+ White must lose his queen or allow mate after 40 ♔xf2 ♕g2#.

37 ♕d2 ♘e3 38 g3

38 ♗xe3 dxe3 39 ♖xe3 ♖xg2! is decisive.

38...♕a8+ 39 ♔g1 ♕f3

Forcing another concession.

40 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 41 ♔xf2 ♘g4+ 42 ♔f1 ♘xh2+ 43 ♔f2 ♘g4+ 44 ♔f1 ♖xe1+ 45 ♔xe1 ♘e5 46 ♔d2 ♔g8 47 b3 ♔f7 0-1

White has no prospect of counterplay, so it's time to resign.

****

Russia had similarly recuperated, though third seeds Poland were faltering. This left Armenia, Ukraine, Russia and England as the top four after four rounds. Round five would be pivotal as the leading teams faced each other. Russia defeated Armenia thanks to some Dubov creativity in the Leningrad Dutch, but despite Gawain's smooth victory over Onischuk, England lost out 2½-1½ to Ukraine and thus went into the rest day in seventh place – but still with all to play for.

G.Jones-V.Onischuk
England vs Ukraine
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 ♘f6 4 0-0 ♘xe4 5 ♖e1 ♘d6 6 ♘xe5 ♗e7 7 ♗f1 ♘xe5 8 ♖xe5 0-0 9 d4 ♗f6 10 ♖e1 ♖e8 11 ♗f4 ♖xe1 12 ♕xe1 ♘e8 13 ♘c3!?

Insisting on gambit play.

13...♗xd4 14 ♘d5 d6 15 ♗g5! f6 16 ♗h4 ♗xb2 17 ♖b1 ♗e5 18 f4 c6 19 fxe5 cxd5 20 exf6 ♘xf6 21 ♗d3 ♗d7 22 ♕g3 ♗c6 23 ♗g5

White has a powerful attack for the two pawns as the players continue to follow that brutal encounter McShane-Dominguez, Netanya 2019.

23...♔h8

Black was able to defend after 23...h6!? 24 ♗xh6 ♕e7 25 ♖f1 ♖f8 26 ♗g5 ♕e5 in Steinberg-Chandra, Paleochora 2019, but no doubt Gawain and Luke had something ready for White here.

24 ♕h4 ♕g8?

24...h6? 25 ♗xh6! gxh6 26 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 27 ♕g6+ ♔h8 28 ♖b4 was crushing for Luke. See the September *CHESS*, where Yochanan Afek indicated Black's best defence: 24...♕d7 25 ♗xf6 gxf6 26 ♕xf6+ ♕g7 27 ♕xd6 ♖e8.

25 ♗xf6 gxf6 26 ♖b4?

Imitating Luke, but 26 ♖f1 ♖f8 27 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 28 ♕xf6+ ♕g7 29 ♕d8+! ♕g8 30 ♕xd6 would have been simple and strong.

26...f5?

Panic. Black would have been OK after the calm 26...♖f8, and if 27 ♖g4 ♕f7 28 ♖g6 ♕e7 29 ♖h6 ♖f7.

27 ♗xf5 ♖f8 28 ♖g4 ♕f7 29 ♖g5!

The advanced rook will make all the difference.

29...♗e8 30 h3 ♖g8 31 ♗e6! 1-0

31...♕xe6 32 ♕d4+ is decisive.

The women's team, meanwhile, was performing to par, winning against lower-rated opponents, but not making enough impact on the higher seeds. In the following game against Greece, debutante Katarzyna Toma provides textbook material on the importance of king safety.

K.Toma-E.Pavlidou
England vs Greece
Sicilian Pelikan

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 e5 5 ♘b5 d6 6 a4 ♗e6 7 ♘1c3 a6 8 ♘a3 ♗e7 9 ♘c4 ♘f6 10 ♗g5 ♘d4 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 a5 ♖c8 13 ♘b6 ♖c5 14 ♗d3 ♗g5 15 ♘cd5 ♗xd5 16 exd5 ♕f6?

It was high time to get the king to safety.

17 c3 ♘f5 18 ♕a4+! ♖b5 19 ♗xb5+ axb5 20 ♕xb5+ ♔e7 21 ♕d7+ ♔f8 22 ♕c8+ ♔e7 23 ♕xb7+ ♔e8 24 ♕c8+ ♔e7 25 ♕xh8 ♘e3 26 ♕f8+ 1-0

At the top end of the Women's section, the first and second seeds met as early as round four. Russia defeated Georgia 2½-1½ in a match that could reasonably be expected to dictate the final medal order.

For a number of the England squad, pre-game preparation included a long walk along the sea front every morning. Despite the initially good weather, the season was clearly winding down and semi-stray dogs outnumbered people on the promenade. Always playful and friendly, the dogs scampered loyally alongside whichever human they chose to take them for a walk (most often Gawain). The rest day brought with it a massive change in weather: it was now raining heavily and continuously through the day. However, conditioned by relatively successful results in sunny weather, we soldiered on with our pre-game preparation, now in heavy rain, flanked, as always, by the happy strays.

Fortunately, the change in weather did not dampen the drive of the team. In round six, the women scored a good win over higher-

rated Sweden, while the men won smoothly against Croatia. This resulted in another big pairing against Armenia with a sense of excitement – and maybe a little nervousness – building in the camp. Another tight match ensued, but Gawain nicely exploited a pin to put the team one up, whereupon David forced a perpetual from a better position to seal the match.

So to the penultimate round. Board 1: England vs Russia. While Russia have almost always been top seeds in the event in past years, this team had a new feel to it. Only Vitiugov remained from last year's Olympiad team – Karjakin, Nepomniachtchi, Kramnik and Jakovenko had been replaced by Andreikin, Alekseenko, Matlakov and Dubov. Young, and overtly more united, it seemed to be more of a team than a collection of individual stars.

Disappointingly for the spectators, the prospect of some Dubov-Jones fireworks had to be left for another day as Russia opted to play their top four. Regarding a player like Dubov as the reserve is a luxury few teams can afford. Instead, Matlakov played a good game with a complicated attack just before the time control.

Sarah Longson's game has caught the eye of not just team-mate Katerzyna Toma, but also the Open team captain, our Executive Editor. Sarah still looks quite calm, while nearer the camera Kanwal Bhatia is deep in thought, as at the other end is top board Jovanka Houska.

M.Matlakov-G.Jones
Russia vs England

White's position looks quite threatening. Surely there must be a win here?

35 h7+ ♔xh7 36 ♘g5+

36 ♖f7+! would have forced the win: 36...♔g8 (or 36...♗g7 37 ♘f6+ ♔h8 38 ♕h6+ ♗xh6 39 ♖h7#) 37 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 38 ♕h6+ ♔f7 39 ♕h7+ ♔f8 40 ♕h8+ ♔f7 41 ♘g5+ ♔e7 42 ♕g7+ ♔e8 43 ♕f7#.

36...♔h6 37 ♘f7+

I assume White must have been planning 37 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 38 ♘xe6, but Gawain had a beautiful trick up his sleeve: 38...♗g7! 39 ♘xd4 ♗xe5+ and White will not win this.

37...♔h7 38 ♘g5+ ♔h6 39 ♕g3 ♗c5 40 ♖g2 ♖g8 41 ♘xe6 ♕b4 42 ♕g5+ ♔h7 43 ♕f6 ♗e3 44 h4 ♕e4 45 ♖e2 ♗g1+ 46 ♔xg1 ♕xe2 47 ♘g5+ ♔h6 48 ♘f7+ ♔h7 49 ♘g5+ ♔h6 50 ♘f7+ ½-½

This time it was Mickey's turn to secure the crucial win. Andreikin finished the tournament winning the gold medal for the best individual performance on top board, but here Mickey smoothly outplays him to draw the match.

M.Adams-D.Andreikin
England vs Russia

Under heavy pressure, which would have continued after, say, 33...♔f8 34 g4, Andreikin now attempted to gain some activity.

33...♖a1?! 34 ♖c8+ ♔h7 35 ♘e5 f6 36 ♘d7! ♘e7?

36...g5 37 hxg5 ♔g6 was a better way to shed a pawn.

37 ♘xf6+! gxf6 38 ♖c7 ♔h6 39 ♖xe7 e5 40 g4

And Mickey went on to convert the extra pawn in typically instructive fashion:

40...♖c1 41 ♔d3 ♖f1 42 ♔e2 ♖c1 43 ♖c7 ♖h1 44 ♖f7! ♖xh4 45 ♖xf6 ♔g5 46 ♖b6 ♔f4 47 ♖f6+ ♔g5 48 ♖b6 ♔f4 49 ♖f6+ ♔g5 50 ♖f8 ♖h2+ 51 ♔d3 b4 52 c3 bxc3 53 ♔xc3 ♖f2 54 ♔d3 ♖b2 55 ♔c4 e4 56 fxe4 ♔xg4 57 e5 ♖c2+ 58 ♔d5 ♖d2+ 59 ♔c6 ♖e2 60 ♔d6 ♖d2+ 61 ♔e7 ♖b2 62 ♖b8 g5 63 e6 ♔h5 64 ♔e8 g4 65 e7 g3 66 ♔d7 ♖d2+ 67 ♔c6 1-0

While all this was going on, I was puzzling over some endgame enigmas.

G.Tamrazyan-K.Bhatia
Switerzland vs England

I had misplayed an earlier attack, coming out of it with an extra pawn instead of a king, but I thought the endgame would be good for me anyway.

37...e3 38 ♕xf4 ♘xf4 39 ♘f3 e2+ 40 ♔g1 ♘d3 41 ♗c3 ♔g8

I was quite happy with this set-up as White's pieces are tied down to the queening square.

42 g4 h6 43 ♔g2 ♔f7 44 ♔g3 ♔e6 45 h4?

Having centralised my king as much as possible, I thought that now was the time to trade e2 for d4. However, I couldn't decide whether or not I should take on h4 first. In the end I decided for superficial reasons that a pawn on g5 would be easier to protect than a pawn on h6, but this is quite irrelevant to the pertinent aspects of the position.

45...e1♕+?

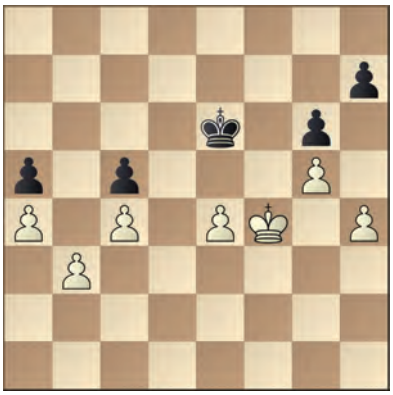
45...gxh4+ 46 ♔xh4 e1♕+ 47 ♗xe1 ♘xe1 48 ♘xe1 ♗xd4 49 ♘d3 ♗e3 is not even the strongest line for Black, but does the job. We reach a similar position to the

game, but where White's king has no way to stop Black's from entering the position.
46 ♗xe1 ♘xe1 47 ♘xe1 ♗xd4 48 hxg5 hxg5 49 ♘d3! And now I saw the difference.
49...♗c3 50 ♔f3 a5 51 a3 axb4 52 axb4 ♔d7

Now I have to try and get in on the queenside, and eventually got there:
53 ♔e2 ♔c7 54 ♔d1 b6 55 ♔c2 ♗d4 56 ♔b3 ♔b7 57 ♔a3 ♔a6 58 ♔a4 ♗e3 59 ♘e5 bxc5 60 bxc5 ♗xc5 61 ♘xc6 ♔b6 62 ♘e5 ♗e3 63 ♔b4 ♗d2+ 64 ♔b3 ♔c5 65 ♘f3 ♗e3 66 ♔c3 d4+ 67 ♔d3 ♔d5 68 ♘e1 ♔e5 69 ♘g2 ♗g1 70 ♔e2 ♔e4 71 ♔f1 d3 72 ♔e1 ♔f3 0-1

Another instructive endgame occurred in round eight as we took on Latvia. Jovanka had outplayed her opponent to reach the position two pawns up, below. However, gaining access with the king is not so straightforward.

J.Houska-D.Reizniece-Ozola
England vs Latvia



White is two pawns up, but how does she make progress? Some material will have to be returned in exchange for space.
52 e5 ♔e7 53 ♔e3

While logical, White goes the wrong way. Correct was 53 h5! gxh5 (53...♔d7 54 ♔e4 ♔e6 55 h6 reveals the other point: h4-h5-h6 gives the option of extra tempi when needed) 54 ♔g3 ♔e6 55 ♔h4 ♔xe5 56 ♔xh5 ♔f4 57 ♔h6 ♔f5 58 ♔xh7 ♔xg5 59 ♔g7 and White's king will take on c5 before Black can take on b3.
53...♔d7 54 ♔d3 ♔e7 55 b4 cxb4 56 c5 ♔d7 57 ♔d4 ♔d8 58 ♔d3 ♔d7 59 ♔c4 ♔d8 60 ♔d3 ♔d7 61 ♔d4 ½-½

The standings going into the final round of the Open were as follows: Ukraine, Russia (13); England (12); Germany, Armenia, Croatia (11). In the event of a tie on match points, standings would be determined by the 'Olympiad-Sonneborn-Berger-Tie-Break without lowest result' system (essentially dependent on the performance of a team's opponents), before game points. Being only eighth seeds, Ukraine had endured the toughest pairings up to this point, and had amassed what was likely to be an unbeatable tie-break score. Coupled with their pairing against 15th seeds Croatia, this made them favourites. With Russia paired against

A happy squad. Can you spot who is holding the trophy for third place in the Open section? Nearest the camera are (l-r) a smiling Nick Pert, David Howell, Lorin D'Costa and Luke McShane.

Poland, England would play Germany knowing a win would guarantee at least Bronze. The Women's section was more clear-cut: Russia led from Georgia with both teams having already played the closest other challengers.

A tense and close last round for all teams saw Russia beat Poland 2½-1½. England similarly had three draws against Germany, with David Howell's game left to decide the match:

D.Fridman-D.Howell
Germany vs England

White had blundered leading to the loss of the exchange in the run-up to move 40, after which Howell had been relentless. The endgame still doesn't look easy to win, but David's technique never looked in doubt.
65...♔h4 66 ♔g2 ♗a7 67 ♗c4 ♖c2 68 ♗d5

Black also gradually gets there after 68 ♗b5 ♗b6 69 ♗a6 ♖a2 70 ♗c4 ♖a5 71 ♗e6 ♖a4 72 ♗b3 ♖d4 73 ♘e1 ♖b4 74 ♘f3+ ♔h5 75 ♗d1 ♖b2 76 ♘g1+ ♔g5 77 ♗e2 ♔f4 (Pein).
68...♖c3 69 ♗e4 ♔g5 70 ♔g3 ♖a3 71 ♔f3 ♔h4 72 ♔g2 ♖a5! 73 ♘e1 ♖g5+ 74 ♔f1 ♔xh3 75 ♗c6 0-1

So England had won its first medal in the Open Section for over 20 years. The overall standings were left up to the result of Ukraine-Croatia. Another tight match ended in a draw when, after an exciting encounter on the first board, Ivanchuk's queen-for-rook advantage could not break down Saric's fortress. The final result was Russia (Gold), Ukraine (Silver), and England (Bronze). Coincidentally, the same placings as way back in 1992, when Ivanchuk and Mickey were also playing.

The Women's section went according to expectation as both Russia and Georgia won to finish first and second, respectively, while fifth seeds Azerbaijan came third. Russia adopted an interesting strategy of giving known attacking-player Valentina Gunina White in all her games, who kept her side of the bargain, while England finished 27th on tie-break after narrowly losing out to a strong Czech team in a surprising last round pairing.

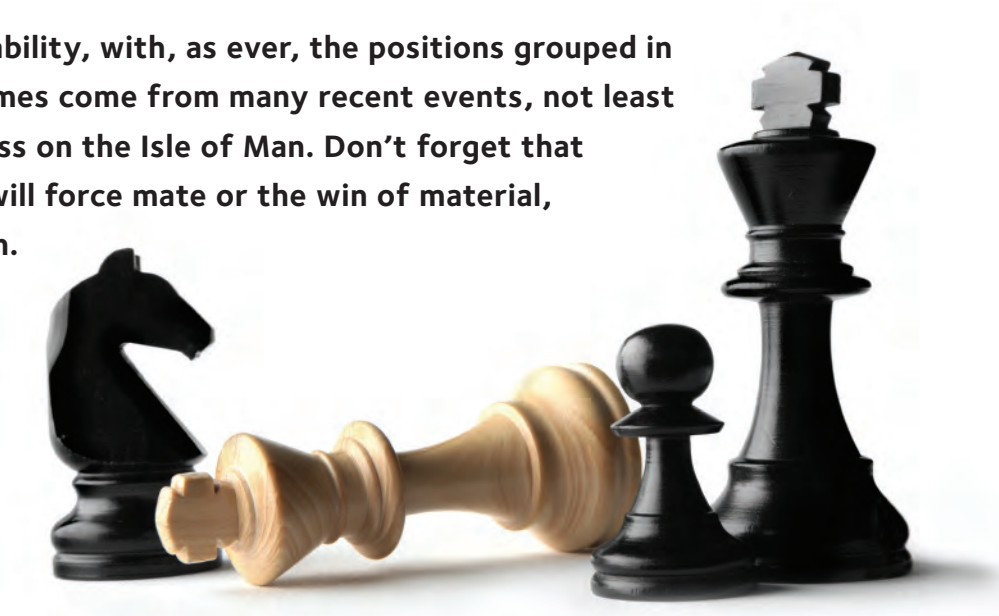
One of the most inspiring things being part of this squad was watching how all the players kept fighting, particularly in critical games. Each player in the Open team won at least one game 'on demand' where that point determined the match result: Pert-Schreiner (round 1), McShane-L'Ami (round 4), Jones-Martirosyan (round 7), Adams-Andreikin (round 8), and, finally, Howell-Fridman (round 9).

When up against better-resourced teams, it is unreasonable to regularly expect advantages straight out of the opening from preparation alone. However, the grit displayed to hold slightly worse positions or to keep pushing in those where there was play, while keeping intensely focused over several hours (David and Luke both had games exceeding 100 moves), was impressive to me. So the English momentum continues – roll on the Olympiad in Moscow next summer!

Find the Winning Moves

24 puzzles to test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from many recent events, not least the World Cup and the Grand Swiss on the Isle of Man. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 54.



Warm-up Puzzles

(1) A.Smith-C.Ward
British Championship, Torquay 2019
White to Play

(2) M.Turner-J.Willow
Bridgend 2019
White to Play

(3) A.Dreev-E.Inarkiev
Russian Championship, Izhevsk 2019
Black to Play

(4) M.Mashayekh-A.Wagner Michel
European Senior Team Ch., Mali Losinj 2019
White to Play

(5) R.Cowan-A.Ismail
York 2019
White to Play

(6) S.Sevian-A.Tari
FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2019
White to Play

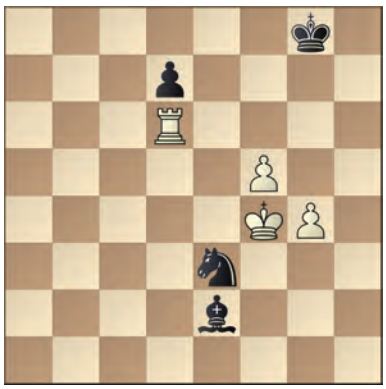
Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 54

(7) S.Nihal-V.Nebolsina
Isle of Man 2019
White to Play

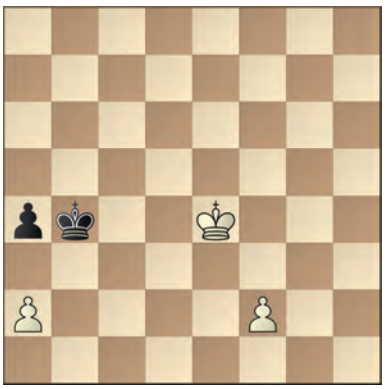
(8) M.Bartel-M.Matuszewski
Polish Ekstraliga 2019
White to Play

(9) D.Charochkina-Z.Shafigullina
Russian Women's Ch., Izhevsk 2019
White to Play

(10) H.Melkumyan-D.Naroditsky
Greensboro 2019
Black to Play



(11) N.Wachinger-M.Gharibyan
World Under-16 Ch., Mumbai 2019
Black to Play and Draw



(12) V.Akobian-D.Swiercz
Saint Louis 2019
White to Play

(13) J.Miesbauer-Liu Guanchu
Budapest 2019
White to Play

(14) L.McShane-N.Grandelius
Eskilstuna (blitz) 2019
Black to Play

(15) P.Monteiro-P.Hopwood
York 2019
Black to Play

Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 54

(16) R.Mounce-S.Wild
York 2019
White to Play

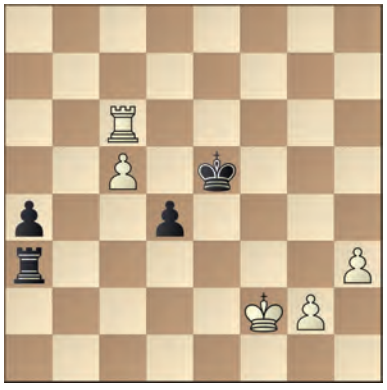
(17) M.Turner-T.Kett
Bridgend 2019
Black to Play

(18) K.Berg-D.Kryakvin
Helsingor 2019
Black to Play

(19) L.McShane-N.Delgado Ramirez
FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk (rapid) 2019
White to Play

(20) S.Ledger-N.Fercec
European Senior Team Ch., Mali Losinj 2019
Black to Play

(21) S.Ganguly-D.Saduakassova
Isle of Man 2019
White to Play



(22) S.Zierk-V.Mikhalevski
Saint Louis 2019
Black to Play

(23) P.Shuvalova-A.Afonasieva
World Under-18 Ch., Mumbai 2019
White to Play

(24) J.K.Duda-J.Xiong
FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk 2019
White to Play

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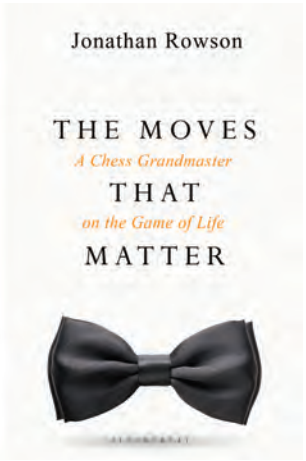
The Moves That Matter



Jonathan Rowson is back with a thoughtful new work for Bloomsbury, *The Moves That Matter*, from which we're delighted to be able to supply his take on the 4NCL

58. Hotel Breakfasts

One ordinary Sunday morning in the autumn of 2012 I was gazing out the window of a large conference-style breakfast room in a conference-style hotel near Reading. I was looking for inspiration but couldn't find it, because while the scenery was verdant and expansive, I could barely see it through the drizzle and fog. At that moment it struck me, like unsettling news from a polite doctor, that I had been playing the 4NCL – Britain's team chess league – for fifteen years.

I looked down at the trusty fried egg on my plate, accompanied by two glistening hash browns and a small puddle of baked beans. This hot food before me, which had once been a symbol of professional on-the-road freedom, now represented, by my rough calculation, my seventy-fifth hotel breakfast in this particular chess event.

I searched for kindred spirits in the faces of fellow chess players, hoping for a nod or wink of solidarity to signal that they felt the moment too. Perhaps they also sensed that our lives are cages of our own making, built by the need for identity and locked by the force of habit. But no, they mostly looked relatively contented, sharing stories of yesterday's game, and thinking ahead to today's.

The faces were very familiar, somewhat older, and, though I had no real way of knowing, not obviously any the wiser. After all, they, like me, were still travelling away from home with a curious sense of purpose, to honour a generic venue with two creative battles, recorded in algebraic notation. They, like me, were hoping for an affirming social experience on the Saturday night, and no doubt also expecting far too much from their hash browns on the Sunday morning.

The closest parallel is the 1993 film *Groundhog Day* with Bill Murray. In that wonderful film, highly recommended as an illustration of spiritual growth, the protagonist is trapped in the same place on the same day, repeated indefinitely as he wakes up to the same radio announcement:

Jonathan Rowson is a three-time British Chess Champion (2004-2006), and wrote the classic works The Seven Deadly Chess Sins *and* Chess for Zebras. *These days he is a director of Perspectiva, researching and exploring how society can change to meet the needs of the modern day, but retains a strong interest in chess.*

'It's Groundhog Day!' He breaks out by transforming his outlook, developing himself, helping others, and finally winning the affections of the woman he had previously merely desired, but gradually chooses to love.

I wasn't quite up to that scale of liberation, but after breakfast I put my hood up and went for a walk in the rain, phoned some loved ones and tried to muster willpower for the game ahead. Unfortunately, the morning's revelation was just too intense, and I could not shake the unsettling feeling that my game did not really matter. I really did try to fight, but played without sufficient distinction to defeat a young International Master from Canada, fresh from his first-ever 4NCL breakfast.

I noticed a game on the same day that contrasted with my own lacklustre display, and it reminded me of the beautiful and original combinations hidden in the game for keen eyes to find, even when our minds lack the vitality to execute them. Scotland's Graham Morrison, who was probably on his fiftieth or so 4NCL breakfast, unwisely grabbed a hot pawn against Grandmaster Mark Hebden, who started the 4NCL long before me, and may even be a 4NCL breakfast centurion. His opponent was soon, of course, toast.

M.Hebden-G.Morrison
4NCL, Sunningdale 2012
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 c4 ♗e7 7 ♘c3 cxd4 8 exd4 d5 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘e5 0-0 11 ♕g4 ♘f6 12 ♕h4 ♘e4 13 ♕h3 ♕xd4 14 ♗f4 ♘f6 15 ♘e2 ♕a4 16 ♖fc1 ♘a6 17 ♖c4 ♕e8 18 ♘g4 g6 19 ♘h6+ ♔g7 20 ♗e5 ♘c5

21 ♖h4?!

21 ♖xc5! bxc5 22 ♘f4 planning some combination of ♕h4, ♘g4 or ♘h5+ is winning.

21...♖h8 22 ♘f4 ♘xd3 23 ♕xd3 ♖d8 24 ♕e3 ♕c6

24...♔f8!.

25 ♖c1 ♕d7 26 h3?!

26 ♘h5+! gxh5 27 ♖d4 wins.

26...♔f8 27 ♖c7 ♕d1+ 28 ♔h2 ♘d5

29 ♘xd5

29 ♗g7+! ♔xg7 30 ♕e5+ mates in three!

29...♕xd5 30 ♖xb7 ♕xb7 31 ♖f4 f5 32 ♗xh8 ♗g5 33 ♖xf5+! exf5 34 ♕xg5 ♖d6 35 ♗e5 ♖e6 36 ♕d8+ 1-0

J.Rowson-R.Panjwani

4NCL, Sunningdale 2012

Sicilian Rossolimo

1 ♘f3 c5 2 e4 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 d6 4 0-0 ♗d7 5 ♖e1 ♘f6 6 h3 ♘e5 7 a4 ♘xf3+ 8 ♕xf3 e5 9 d3 ♗e7 10 ♗g5 ♗c6 11 ♘c3 ♘d7 12 ♗c4 0-0 13 ♗e3 ♔h8 14 g4 ♗g5 15 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 16 ♕e3 h6 17 ♖f1 g6 18 f4 exf4 19 ♕xf4 ♘e5

20 ♕f6+ ♕xf6 21 ♖xf6 ♘xc4 22 dxc4 ♖ae8 23 ♖e1 ♖e6 24 ♖xe6 fxe6 25 ♖d1 ♖d8 26 b3 ♖d7 27 ♔f2 ♔g7 28 ♔e3 ♔f6 29 h4 ♖f7 30 ♖f1+ ♔e7 31 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 32 g5 hxg5 33 hxg5 a5

34 ♔f4 e5+ 35 ♔e3 ♔e7 36 ♔d3 ♔d8 37 ♘d1 ♗d7 38 ♘e3 ♗e6 39 ♔c3 ♔d7 40 ♔d3 ♔c7 41 ♘d5+ ♗xd5 42 cxd5 ♔b6 43 ♔c3 ♔a6 44 ♔c4 ♔b6 45 ♔d3 ½-½

The Moves that Matter: A Chess Grandmaster on the Game of Life by Jonathan Rowson, is out now, published by Bloomsbury Publishing and available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £20.00 or £18.00 for Subscribers.

Forthcoming Events

Nov 29 - Dec 8 **London Chess Classic**
www.londonchessclassic.com; events for everyone

Nov 30 - Dec 1 **Hereford Congress**
www.cornwallchess.org.uk/Hereford/info.shtml

November 30 **Malawi Rapidplay, Prestwick**
www.chessscotland.com/events/ or call 07876 454863

November 30 **Omagh Rapidplay**
www.ulsterchess.org

November 30 **Southampton Rapidplay**
www.southamptonchess.org.uk/rapidplay/

December 1 **Bolton Rapidplay**
boltonchessclub.webs.com

December 1 **Plymouth Rapidplay**
plymouthchess.uk

December 5 **Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz**
www.hendonchessclub.com or call 07855 036537

December 8 **Coventry & District Rapidplay**
covchessleague.blogspot.com/p/2nd-rapidplay.html

December 14-15 **Leyland Congress**
congress.popmalc.org.uk/congress/49/home

December 14-15 **Northwick Park Congress & London Junior**
www.ljcc.co.uk

December 14 **Poplar Rapidplay**
www.spanglefish.com/docklandschessclub

December 26-28 **London Christmas Congress & London Junior**
www.ljcc.co.uk

Dec 28 - Jan 5 **Hastings International Congress**
www.hastingschess.com or call 01424 445348

January 3-5 **Shropshire Chess Congress**
www.shropshirechesscongress.org.uk

January 5 **Hull Rapidplay**
www.hullchess.com/Rapid+Play+2020

And for the Online Connoisseur:

December 2-8 **London Chess Classic**
www.londonchessclassic.com; British KO and Carlsen et al

December 10-24 **FIDE Grand Prix, Jerusalem**
worldchess.com; Aronian, Karjakin, Vachier-Lagrave, Yu Yangyi, etc.

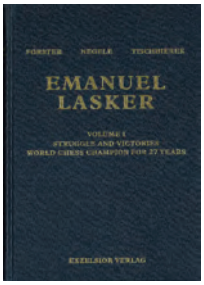
Congress organisers – Don't forget to email editor@chess.co.uk to ensure your event is listed, or if you really want to guarantee a good entry, contact Matt@chess.co.uk to discuss having it advertised.

Christmas Stocking Fillers

Uncertain what you want for Christmas? Let Sean Marsh be your guide!

What would you like to see in your stocking this year? Well, rather than suggest you send in your own dubious answers on a festive postcard, I shall immediately offer some suggestions, in a desperate attempt to keep the editor from reaching for his blue pencil.

First of all, the four books which made the shortlist for the 2019 English Chess Federation Book of the Year award should be automatic choices for any self-respecting chess player's Christmas list. It was a tough contest this year, with all four books offering something original.



Emanuel Lasker – Volume 1
Richard Forster, Michael Negele & Raj Tischbierek (eds.), 450 pages
Exzelsior Verlag
RRP £54.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £49.45**

My review of this magnificent book can be found in the August issue of *CHESS*, but those wanting advice in a nutshell could cut to my conclusion, which said: "I recommend finding some quiet time, putting up your feet and losing yourself to the chess world of a former time that has been brilliantly brought back to life by this magnificent labour of love." Two more volumes are in the pipeline and I feel absolutely certain they will be worth the wait.

Practical Chess Beauty
Yochanan Afek, 464 pages
Quality Chess
RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

I reviewed this one back in the February magazine, and will now refer readers to that issue for further information, but do recall that I concluded with the words: "This is a very fine book indeed and, whisper it gently, but we may already have a strong candidate for Book of the Year" – which turned out to be accurate.

Checkmate! The Love Story of Mikhail Tal and Sally Landau
Sally Landau, 224 pages
Elk and Ruby
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Elk and Ruby continue to publish plenty of very interesting books. Sally Landau was the first wife of the seventh world champion and this is a translation of her memoir, first published in Russian in 1998, which offers a unique insight into the universally popular player. There is no point turning to this book to find games and analysis; there is not even a single move to be found. Instead, we get the inside story of a larger-than-life character, whose lifestyle was as unconventional as his play. This work is not an attempt to "Portray him with a saintly halo or as pure and innocent. That is impossible, not least because he was so unusual and ultimately indecipherable."

There are three parts to the book, with two written by Sally and the middle one written by their son, Georgy. It starts with the first meeting of Tal and Sally, and how she visited his apartment for the first time, with Sally impressing Tal by playing Rachmaninoff on the piano. Incidentally, later on it is said that Tal himself played the piano well, even though he was lacking two fingers on his right hand.

Sally, as an actress, took up smoking to help her play a stage role and admits, "I must confess, it's me who taught Misha to smoke." Typical of Tal, who never did things by halves, he "Would only need a lighter to light the first cigarette – all the others would be lit from the previous one." Of course, it is unlikely Tal would have kept away from cigarettes even if Sally had been a complete non-smoker; his addictive tendencies would surely have brought him to the same dangerous road. Georgy relates one of the occasions when Tal escaped from hospital. "He said he was bored. He put his raincoat on over his pyjamas, surreptitiously ordered a taxi and went home."

There is a very good photographic section; all of the pictures were new to me. There are some new Fischer stories too. Apparently he took quite a shine to Sally, which he handled with his usual awkwardness. "If Fischer came across us on the beach he would come and sit with us, unceremoniously shoving Misha away with his elbow and engaging me in long conversations."

This is a real warts-and-all account of life with the unconventional and unpredictable Tal, sparing no blushes along the way. He always seemed to get away with being the loveable rogue, but living with him was clearly as difficult as trying to deal with the thickets of problems he posed over the board. No other book has ever offered such a candid insight into the brilliant but deeply flawed Mikhail Tal.

Game Changer
Matthew Sadler & Natasha Regan, 416 pages
New in Chess
RRP £19.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.95**

It always takes a very special book to win the ECF award and I doubt anyone would be able to read this one and disagree that it was a worthy winner.

'Game Changer' is currently something of an overused phrase, but here it works as the perfect title, because *AlphaZero*, the artificial intelligence created by Google's DeepMind, really has changed our favourite game. Indeed, it is even proving to be a positive influence on the game of Magnus Carlsen.

Garry Kasparov, in his foreword, is full of praise for the project. "Chess has been shaken to its roots by *AlphaZero*, but this is only a tiny example of what is to come. Hidebound disciplines like education and medicine will also be shaken, if slowly, by the improved results promised by AI analysis, if we allow them to." It could be said, without fear of successful contradiction, that the thirteenth world champion is no stranger to bold claims and hyperbole. However, this time his enthusiasm is not misplaced.

Matthew and Natasha have written a simply wonderful and vibrant book with fabulous depth. I usually find games between anything other than humans to be dull and uninvolving, but those given in this book are all extremely interesting, with *AlphaZero* showing plenty of remarkable ideas. The authors bring in plenty of historical parallels, such as showing how Bent Larsen used his rook's pawns and how Alekhine played the endgame. In the former case especially, it is exceptionally interesting as lots of Larsen's ideas were awarded a gold star for being top of the maverick class, yet as can be seen from the book's examples, *AlphaZero* too excels in pushing the rook's pawns as quickly and as far as possible.

AlphaZero shines in all parts of the game and is consistently direct in its approach. This example, taken from the chapter on 'Attacking the King: sacrifices for time, space and damage' shows some remarkable touches.

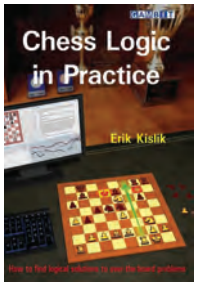
Stockfish 8-AlphaZero
London 2018

Sadler admits that "Whizzing through this game, I was expecting 40 or 50 moves of tedium with some long manoeuvres from both sides. I wasn't prepared for *AlphaZero's* solution!"

14...f5 15 exf5 e4 16 ♘d2 e3

"A fantastic idea. 14...f5 and 15...e4 opened up the b8-h2 diagonal for the dark-squared bishop to aim at the white king, and 16...e3 diverts the white pawn from f2, which prevents White from establishing an effective pawn barrier on the b8-h2 diagonal. A key enabler of this sacrifice is the damaged white queenside structure." Further sacrifices followed, but *Stockfish* gamely held on for a draw.

The authors have done a remarkable job of putting the inexorable rise of *AlphaZero* into context and explaining the finer points of the deep games. This magnificent book can be enjoyed on several different levels and that includes the quest for self-improvement. As the authors write, "We believe that there is a large amount of new and instructive material in this book that we hope you will thoroughly enjoy reading and trying out in your games." Having spent some time immersed in *Game Changer,* I can definitely agree.



Chess Logic in Practice
Erik Kislik, 240 pages
Gambit Publications
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Erik Kislik's previous book for Gambit, *Applying Logic on Chess* (published in 2018), was very impressive and he has now produced a companion volume, with logic again at its heart.

As the blurb has it, "Chess-players understand that it is vital to play logically, but often lack the methods needed to do so. In this book, renowned trainer Erik Kislik presents a wide range of specific concepts that will help them succeed. These include positional techniques, thinking methods, and modes of play to adopt when either better or worse."

There are three main sections, namely: Thinking Concepts, Positional Concepts, and Exercises. The titles for the individual chapters reveal a quirky humour and they include: Only One Way to Lose, When Playing a Bad Move Wins a Good Game, and Painfully Slow Moves. Logic certainly features strongly in the chapter on Incorrect Piece Exchanges.

Here is one example.

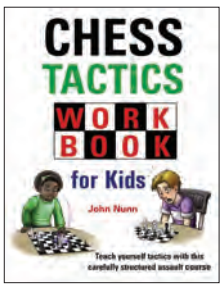
Z.Ilincic-S.Shankland
Budapest 2009

"Black must appreciate the importance of the white d-pawn (especially if it comes to d6) and focus on White's real threats, not fight peripheral battles." With that in mind, Black's next move clearly fails to cut the mustard.

14...♗h3?

"A much better idea for Black is simply to improve his worst-placed pieces." This means the rooks and 14...♖ac8 is the recommendation, with a view to playing ...c4, securing the d3-square for action or occupation. Thus the game move is revealed to be the result of stereotypical thinking and not something which is necessary according to the logic inherent in the position.

This book is a very good follow-up to Kislik's previous work. Taking the logical approach to various typical problems that are commonly found over the board can only help readers to identify their errors and find clearer solutions. The author is quite prepared to show games in which he failed to find the answers at the time, all of which led to the flow of logic which has created the material for this thought-provoking book. This is ideal study material for high-end club players and serious tournament competitors.



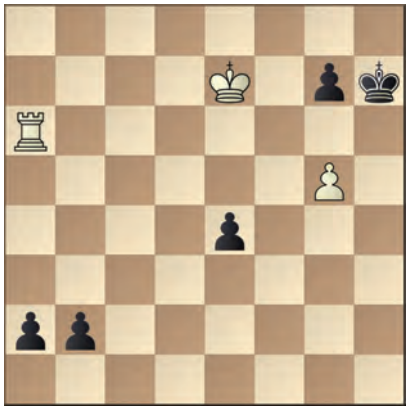
Chess Tactics Workbook for Kids
John Nunn, 128 pages
Gambit Publications
RRP £12.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.25**

The Gambit team has been busily continuing their popular series of books for juniors. The lineage of the series dates all the way back to 1998's *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess*. It would be a mistake to overlook this series, believing them to be junior-specific. In

fact many club players could do a lot worse than taking a look at the content of this impressive series.

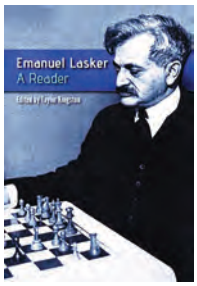
According to the author, "This is a book for those who know the rules of chess and are keen to start winning games". Sure enough the elementary tactics – such as pins, forks and skewers – are all present and correct, but the book moves on to more difficult matters, such as Opening and Closing Lines, and Forcing a Draw. Each chapter has tactic-specific exercises and there are six test papers at the end of the book, for which the reader receives no clues as to which tactics are available in the positions.

Try this one, taken from Test Paper 2.



It's White to play. Can you find the way to win?

If it is too simple for you then feel free to pass over this book. On the other hand, if you enjoy analysing it then you could pull the old trick of buying this book for a chess junior with the aim of first reading it yourself.



Emanuel Lasker: A Reader
Taylor Kingston (ed.), 400 pages
Russell Enterprises
RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

The second world champion continues to attract attention. This mammoth work offers enough authentic Lasker material to keep the reader occupied for the whole of New Year and beyond.

Taylor Kingston has assembled an extraordinary potpourri of "Material written and about the legendary chess world champion", and it has clearly been a labour of love. In fact the project was originally started by David Kaufman and his untimely death led to Kingston having to restart the book from scratch. It is unusual in that it is neither a biography nor a best games collection, even though plenty of Lasker's games are included. So, too, are numerous games by Lasker's contemporaries, with the criteria for inclusion being that he was the annotator of them all.

There are significant excerpts from a whole range of publications, including *The London Chess Fortnightly*, *Lasker's Chess Magazine* and his notes in various tournament and match books. Following the chess aspects there are sections showcasing prime cuts from his writings on philosophy, mathematics and Lasca, 'The Great Military Game'.

It is good to be able to read so much about some of the lesser-highlighted episodes of Lasker's life, such as the circumstances of the cancelled 1906 title match against Maroczy. The Hungarian is very much a forgotten man these days, but he was one of the world's top players at the time and it is interesting to speculate on how well he would have done in the contest of 'eight games up, draws not to count'.

Negotiations came and went, with Maroczy keen to avoid Lasker's choice of Cuba for the second half of the match. As he said *in Lasker's Chess Magazine*, "I deny not that a chess match in the centre of revolution would be very interesting, but I do not think that we could keep the necessary sangfroid if a wandering bullet should penetrate the vortex of the playing room." The Cuban aspect is curious, as Lasker famously struggled with the heat on his way to losing to Capablanca in 1921.

Lasker went on to demolish Marshall in a match one year later. He had developed an uncanny knack of finding weaknesses in the play of his opponents and exploiting them on a regular basis.

F.Marshall-E.Lasker
World Ch. (Game 3), USA 1907

Marshall is under pressure. He played **42 ♖f1**, which Lasker claimed was faulty. "In his anxiety to preserve his f-pawn, without which the ending of two rooks versus queen would have been hopeless, he committed a decisive mistake by 42 ♖f1, when by giving up his queen he hoped to escape all danger. 42 ♖c2 instead was the proper play, as it would have preserved the f-pawn and forced Black to give up his rook for queen, thus reducing the position to a difficult ending, the result of which is impossible to foretell, because its analysis would fill many pages, but in which, in any case, Black would have the advantage."

The game did not last much longer:
42...♖f5 43 ♕e8 ♕h4+ 0-1

This gave Lasker an excellent start of three wins from the first three games and set him up very nicely for his ultimate match victory.

There is so much of interest in this book and it is ideal for dipping into and reconnecting with chess from another era. As Kingston puts it: "You are invited to enter the mind of this wide-ranging, insightful and outspoken intellect. Lasker was not always right, any more than he always won at the chess board, but he was always interesting." I was intrigued by the section on Lasca, a game invented by Lasker himself. It is similar to checkers in some respects, but has important differences: for example, the board is seven by seven.

Emanuel Lasker was a truly remarkable man. His record-breaking spell as champion of the world speaks for itself. This 400-page book left me eager for more of Lasker's games and writing. The second book about him brings this review feature full circle, which seems a good place to draw my series of seasonal recommendations to a timely conclusion.

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I Remember...

Ben Graff reports on the Coventry League Centenary Match, while reflecting on the illustrious past and bright future for chess in Coventry and Leamington

Coming up England by a different line
"Why, Coventry!" I exclaimed.
"I was born here."

'I Remember, I Remember' by Phillip Larkin

I would imagine that 28 chess players meeting up in an ice cream parlour must be a somewhat unusual occurrence. But on the 18th September, we had gathered for good reason, to celebrate a hundred years of the Coventry League with a match against the Leamington League, which I chair and captained on the night. The story of chess in our region is a part of the fabric of the city, and we were all agreed that this would be the first of several events to mark Coventry becoming UK City of Culture in 2021. An opportunity for all of us to come together as friends, to play some chess and to reflect on the history of both leagues and the city of Coventry itself. We also ate quite a lot of ice cream.

So many stories. So much to remember. This event, the latest chapter of something bigger than all of us, as chess in Coventry and Leamington continues to evolve and to thrive. Perhaps we live in a different age now. Social media means that far more of what goes on in leagues up and down the country is recorded for posterity. Yet, even so, it falls to all of us to help ensure that the memories of our own era are preserved for the players who will follow us. In the weeks leading up to the match, I had been back through the archives and had talked to some of our longer serving members about days gone by and their hopes for the future.

The earliest recorded happenings of note inevitably predate even the hardiest of our current players. Early local chess organisers certainly knew how to draw the stars in. Paul Morphy played a blindfold simul in 1858 in Birmingham, in which Leamington Club Secretary Jebz Carr tried to confuse him with an irregular flank opening. The records suggest this did not ultimately turn out well for Carr. In 1890 Joseph 'The Black Death' Blackburne gave two simultaneous displays at the Pump Rooms in Leamington. Winning all 22 games on the first day, and winning six and drawing two on the second, when blindfolded. Howard Staunton and Herr. Lowenthal are both listed as Honorary Members of the Leamington Club. Much later, according to the *1970 BCF Yearbook*, Botvinnik would count amongst his many other illustrious titles that of Honorary Vice President of the Warwickshire Chess Association.

A sprinkling of magic dust ahead? The Coventry and Leamington line up before battle begins.

Both the Coventry and Leamington Leagues were formed in the shadow of war, Coventry in 1919 and Leamington in 1949. Coventry's world war two history is well documented, from her role as the manufacturing heartbeat of the country, through to the terrible destruction wrought by the Luftwaffe. The re-building of Coventry Cathedral perhaps the ultimate symbol of international peace and reconciliation. Less well known is that Coventry was also crucial to the first world war effort, from vehicle and tank production through to munitions. The industries that formed the life blood of the city (and its chess) until the 1980s, were pivotal to keeping Britain free in her hours of greatest need.

The Coventry League that Mike Johnson first played in back in 1956 as a fourteen-year-old was still very much shaped by the industrial heritage of the war years. He told me: "I remember the names of many clubs, now gone. Massey Ferguson, Triumph, Standard, Jaguar, Daimler, Self-Change Gears, Armstrong Whitworth, Morris, Dunlop. There was a very different culture; it was a very different city I suppose. Venues were much easier to obtain, because the factory social clubs all had plenty of rooms at their disposal. The city had a different rhythm to it. We were perhaps a more homogeneous society back then, for good or ill. Monday was snooker night, chess was on a Tuesday, darts on a Wednesday, cards on Thursday. I think like most leagues we reached our peak in the shadow of Fischer-Spassky, but things fell away a bit after this and with the more general decline in manufacturing in the area."

I asked Mike if he thought the chess itself had changed much and he told me that the standard is higher today. The 4NCL and computers have made a difference. There are more congresses. About half the players taking part in the centenary match now play in both leagues – something that would have been unheard of in days gone by. While no one would argue that the smoking ban had been anything other than a positive, we both reflected on the nights that had shaped the first half of Mike's chess career and the very start of mine, when it could be difficult to

Ben Graff (right) with Colin Green - the current Chairs of the Leamington and Coventry Leagues.

make out the pieces through the fog of cigarette smoke. There was certainly something gladiatorial about those times.

Bruce Holland was a founder member of Kenilworth Chess Club in 1975 and has dedicated much of his life to chess organising in many different capacities. He highlighted the growing challenges that clubs have found over the years in finding venues, as the notion of works clubs has declined so rapidly. He noted that the Leamington League was always more geographically focussed from the outset, which perhaps has helped, but that all clubs need to have their wits about them in a society where chess does not really bring the money in. Bruce also pointed out the rise in junior players and women over the years. Paul Lam's Coventry Chess Academy a shining example of the city looking to the future and developing the next generation of talent. There is always more to do, but we would like to think that both leagues are a very welcoming environment for all who want to play.

Bruce was quick to praise Leamington League founder Stanley Gibbons and long-time former chair Colin Searle (author of the excellent *The best games and history of the Leamington and District chess league)* for their contributions. "Many have played their part, but the two of them really did the most to make the Leamington League what it is today." Colin's book is very much the go-to publication for those who want to learn more about the league. To this day, a beautiful trophy Stanley Gibbons made with his own hands is still awarded annually to the league player with the highest percentage score over the season.

Perhaps Rugby hold the record for most stunning achievement of a Coventry League club. Back in 1982, with a squad that included Mark Hebden, Keith Arkell, Paul Littlewood and Bob Wildig, they saw off both Cambridge and, against expectations, Oxford University to be crowned National Club Champions. The reward for which was a European Cup game in Moscow against Soviet club Burevestnik. So it was that Arkell, Thomas, Turner, Wade, Wildig and Talbot travelled to Moscow Central Chess Club for an opening ceremony, at which the dignitaries included Vasily Smyslov. Keith Arkell, then an IM, doubtless claimed the record for the most senior scalp by a player in Coventry League colours, taking down then world number six Lev Psahkis in the first of their two games (Lev won the second). While Burevestnik won the match comfortably, what an occasion this must have been.

Coventry has also hosted the British Championships twice, first in 1970 when Bob Wade was victorious then in 2015 when Jonathan Hawkins lifted the trophy. Back in 1925 Henry Ernest Atkins won his ninth and final crown in neighbouring Stratford-upon-Avon. So, we gathered on the night of the centenary match, with a lot of pride in Coventry's chess heritage. Coventry League Chairman and organiser Colin Green (ably assisted by Malcolm Harding) and I had agreed that our fourteen-board double-header match should include players of all strengths and ages. Current British Over-65 Champion Mark Page and British Under-Nine runner-up Jude Shearsby (who won both his games) were in action, as was Bob Wildig all these years on from Rugby's finest hour back in 1982.

We had posed for pictures outside the ice cream parlour, which had once been Coventry's Fire Station. Another symbol perhaps of the way in which the city continually evolves and adapts. Most of our clubs were represented, and the grading bandings meant that we had players rated 190 all the way down to 60 in action, nobody's contribution more important than anyone else. I had the edge all the way through the first of my two games with Nuneaton's Tony Green, but never figured out how to properly capitalise and we drew. His weak isolated pawn ably defended by a mass of pieces and no other obvious avenues of attack at my disposal. In our second game, Tony pressed hard with the white pieces, but I clung on for another draw. Both of us engrossed by the games and left feeling that the mysteries of chess at its deepest level had eluded us once more.

Ultimately the first leg saw Leamington race into a 9-5 lead. In the second, the scores were reversed, resulting in a 14-14 tie on the night. One wit suggested to general amusement that an extended match and a 19-19 result would have been more appropriate. It was clear how proud everyone was of both the Leamington and Coventry Leagues. All most wanted for the future was for things to continue much as they do now, and as they have for many years. Some clubs have inevitably come and gone with the changing character of the city and surrounding area. Others have endured.

We know there is still more to be done to welcome players in from a range of different backgrounds. That we can't be complacent in an age where there are so many other choices at people's disposal. Coventry becoming the City of Culture is something that we are keen to capitalise on in the chess community and that will be a real area of future focus. Ultimately, with a bit of luck, the Coventry League will celebrate two hundred years. I really like the thought that one day someone else might write about that.

Mike Donnelly and Bob Wildig have been battling against each other for many years, here is their second game of the night, with notes from Mike.

M.Donnelly-R.Wildig
Coventry 2019
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3

Bob and I have played numerous times over the last 30 years and games have featured 1 e4, 1 d4, 1 c4, 1 ♘f3 and 1 g3, but the Catalan Opening has been the most common.

3...d5 4 ♘f3 b6 5 ♗g2 ♗b7 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♕a4+ ♘fd7

A rare line and one played instantly. 7...♘bd7 is the most common and has been played by Hort and Psakhis in the past and often by Moiseenko more recently. Bologan back in 2012 recommended 8 ♘e5, trying to exploit the c6-square (8 ♕xc4 c5 is level, as in several GM encounters), although the position seems only marginally better for White after 8...♗xg2 9 ♔xg2 c5 10 dxc5.

8 ♕xc4 ♗e7 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 ♗f4 c5 11 dxc5

11 d5 exd5 12 ♘xd5 a6 13 ♖fd1 b5 14 ♕c2 is another promising line for White.

11...♘xc5 12 ♖fd1 ♕c8 13 ♖ac1 ♖d8

Natural, but now White is far better, so maybe Black should have tried 13...a5!?.

14 ♗xb8

Freeing squares for the queen, but 14 b4 ♘cd7 15 ♕b3 ♘c6 16 ♘b5 ♗xb4 17 ♘g5 gives White an overwhelming game.

14...♕xb8 15 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 16 ♖d1 ♕e8

Now Black has more or less equalised, but he was some five or six minutes behind on the clock.

17 ♕f4 ♖d8

17...♗f6 is easier, and equal.

18 ♖xd8 ♕xd8 19 ♘e5 ♗f6 20 ♗xb7 ♘xb7?!

20...♗xe5 21 ♕xe5 ♘xb7 keeps it level.

21 ♘c6!

21...♕a8

21...♕d6 22 ♕xd6 ♘xd6 23 ♘xa7 ♗xc3 24 bxc3 leaves Black defending a pawn down.

22 ♕c7 ♗d8 23 ♘xd8 ♘xd8 24 ♘b5 ♘c6 25 ♘d6 ♘d8

Black is pinned down and White has several ways to win.

26 e4 g5 27 ♘c8 ♘c6 28 ♕xc6! 1-0

British Over-65 Champion Mark Page (left) in action, while Jude Shearsby, the runner-up in the British Under-9 Championship, looks on.

Readers' Letters

Copyright & Staunton

I read with interest and amusement Geoff Chandler's article 'You've Been Beckered!' in the October *CHESS*. The article wishes that Staunton had included copyrighting of games within the 1851 rules... but in fact, he did! (Or, at least, a very similar concept.)

From the Rules and Regulations of the Tournament:

12. As the managing committee guarantee to every subscriber of a guinea and upwards, a correct copy of the whole games, and as considerable expense must attend the recording of so many games and their subsequent publication, it must be understood that no one will be allowed, in the first instance, to publish any part of them, without the express sanction of the committee.

Granted, the conceptual 'copyright' is held by the managing committee rather than the players themselves, but the principle is similar: that distribution of the game scores is limited to those who have paid to receive them.

I had recently studied the 1851 rules as research for an article for *Chess Life* on adjournments, which is where I ran across this regulation, and of course it caught my attention.

Jon Crumiller, Princeton, New Jersey

Gijón & BHW

A few notes about the Gijón article in the September *CHESS*.

Dad started his *Chess* business in the Masonic Buildings in Sutton Coldfield, with the magazine printed in Kettering. He moved to the old stationmaster's house in Sutton, before starting to print it himself. For a short time, he just did the typesetting. This was on Monotype machinery. Each character was cast from molten poisonous metal, controlled by wide punched paper tape. At the end of each line, a special punched code organised extra spacing, so that lines were of exactly equal length. Characters were cast in reverse order. This all worked without electronics, with diagrams were set by hand. (Linotype machinery was more expensive and even more complex.)

Dad was keen to get the magazine out with hot news. He did a short course and bought a press, to do the printing too. A lecturer from the Birmingham technical college did some work for him. Such people were exempt from the union membership requirement. The printers' union was very powerful, probably because they agreed to print newspapers that were largely politically on the right (*The Guardian* being the exception).

Francesco Perez was the other foreign master regularly present at Dad's festivals. He often took third place behind O'Kelly and Donner. He told us Wood children that he was a communist. We thought this was a joke, and dangerous for a Spaniard, but later we heard that he had moved to Cuba. All these star players were very pleasant in different ways. I played once against O'Kelly. Donner on the next board was annoyed that I missed a sacrificial forced draw, but I had played with no such hope.

I remember the huge bunch of bananas brought back from Spain. They hung in the hall, not the living room. We could pluck them from halfway up the stairs.

The real hero of Dad's early career was my mother, who nurtured four children and helped nurse our uncle (back from near-death as a POW in Burma), while Dad indulged his passion for chess. She also correctly diagnosed diabetes for Dad and herself, about 30 years too late. Our GP refused to waste NHS money on a test.

Chris Wood, Munich

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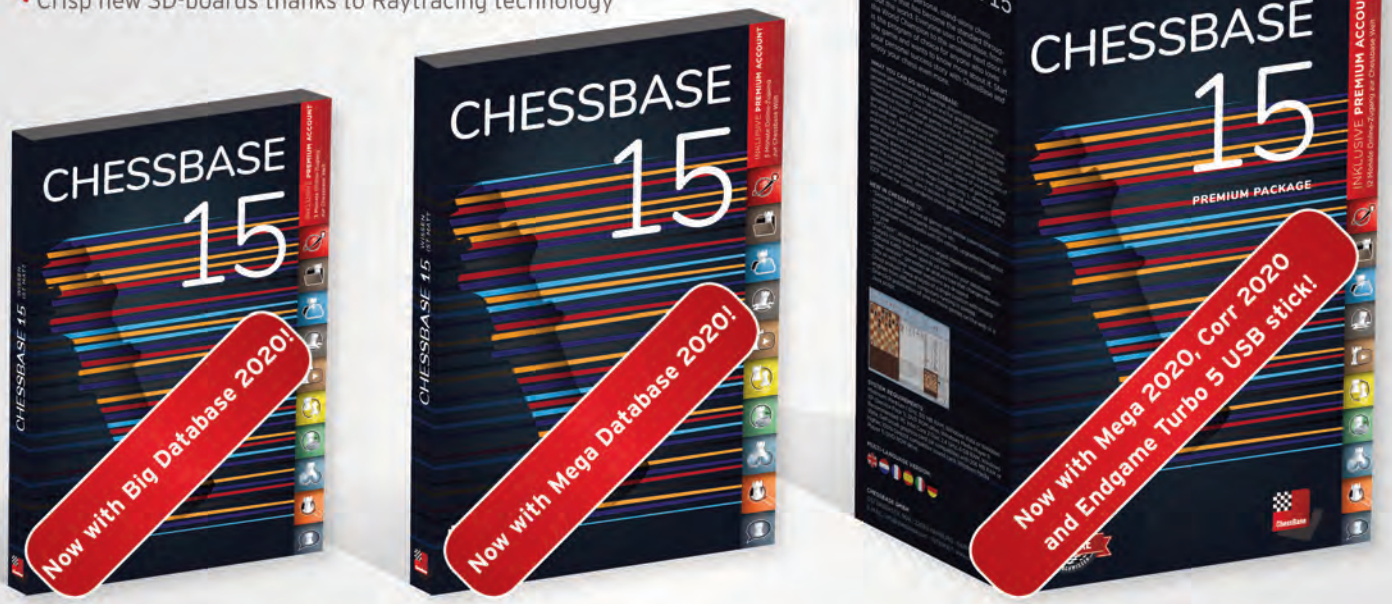
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Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs - by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

I can scarcely believe that this is my final column of the decade. *Tempus fugit* indeed. It is a time to take stock, yet I want to talk of a beginning. Many people will know that I have been appointed as the Development Officer for the English Chess Federation. In short, the role includes promoting social, women's and junior chess, and helping to increase ECF membership.

We live in interesting times and social media has a significant influence on our lives. The advance of the internet and online chess has been a revelation and no-one would argue with that. Who would have dreamed of such progress even a couple of decades ago? One can find any amount of information, keep up with the latest news and games, follow and play in tournaments, make new friends, train and, of course, purchase and download books, videos, and more. It's like having a massive chess candy store on your desk.

How is one meant to compete with that? One of the aspects of chess that I am fiercely protective about is club chess. Many other chess players share my passion. True, we can (and often do) give many legitimate reasons why we think that club chess is declining and the world wide web is common amongst them.

Yet I will be focussing on the aspect of chess being a *live* event. I watched the very final night of the Proms with that phenomenal soprano Jamie Barton. One of the commentators said something at the end that resonated with me. He said, "Anyone in the audience could have stayed at home this evening and put on a CD to listen to this music. Yet they wanted to come out for the evening. They wanted to participate. They wanted a live experience."

I believe that chess can offer the same. Let me ask what can you *not* get by playing chess online? Well, for a start, you're not exercising by getting off the couch and outdoors on your way to an actual club. You are not meeting real people. That human interaction which is so important for mental and even spiritual growth is not the same online. Living more of your life in 3D as opposed to 2D has its own merits for sure.

Then there is the tactile nature of chess. Personally speaking, I have always loved the feel of the pieces in my hand. The process of merely looking upon them, moving them, pressing the clock and writing down the move has always been integral to my chess experience, and I want to keep that alive.

Blenheim Palace provided a most impressive setting for the recent English Girls Championship. Has your club considered running an event in an impressive local setting?

Someone once said to me that they played online because they did not have to put up with body odour from their opponent. Fair enough – I get that, but I have no time for those wastrels online that won't finish a game (because they are losing), and leave you waiting for the clock to tick down. How many precious minutes of our lives have we lost on that?

There are fors and againsts for both online and club chess that are clear, but the focus needs to be on maintaining and growing club chess. They talk about young people saving the planet – well, we might well need young people to save our chess clubs.

At my club in Banbury, we have a nice warm venue, which is easy to get to. We have a great group of people, who are passionate about chess and help develop the game of other members. Moreover, we always ensure that newcomers feel welcome and get a game with which to start their chess journey. Further we provide tea/coffee and biscuits. Sometimes there are even cakes. It's an evening well spent away from the computer screen.

If we as a chess community want clubs to 'stay alive' then surely it is up to us collectively to make that happen? Honestly, we really should be saying: ask not what my club can do for me, but what can I do for my club?

Speaking to people early on I am learning about so much good work going on. Chess clubs are working with prisons. They are working with local councils, playing in libraries and cafes, and holding events to attract members. This is superb and I want to hold individuals and groups who do this up to the light as those to benchmark against. I have to ask myself, what can we do around the country to capture non-chess players? How can we expose our game and show it for the wonderful game it is to the general public?

I recently attended the English Girls Chess Championships run by Andrew Varney and his team. He works his socks off for Oxfordshire Juniors and to think that he secured Blenheim Palace for the event is quite astonishing. Who would not want to play there? Yet even with such a prestigious venue there were some girls who chose not to play. Andrew would not say this, but I will – some had very good reason no doubt, but I think for others it was a case of 'Oh I am doing something else'.

It did not help that the event clashed with the Isle of Man, otherwise some of our

leading female role models such as Jovanka Houska would have attended and supported the girls. One role model was able to make it and it was great to see the girls mixing with Sara Hegarty, who also gave a simul in the Long Library. What a marvellous event. This one event alone was a long time in the making. No-one says it is easy, but the benefits for chess and chessplayers when an event comes off are clear for all to see.

This and other events exist for people who are already ECF members or at least who already play chess, whereas we could be chasing new blood. It's difficult to attract the attention of local media sometimes and wouldn't it be nice for the general public to come in and see the youngsters at work? That would really open their eyes and show that chess is far from an old man's game – which is the public perception I am afraid. Obviously, child protection regulations have to be carefully adhered to, but we have to find a way of 'opening up' chess to new people.

We don't see the general public having access at the 4NCL or the British Championships. There are viewing galleries in some venues – could we use these? Imagine if Joe Public saw for the first time the likes of Elis and Imogen Dicen concentrating hard at the board, locked in mental combat with their opponent – and not a computer screen in sight. Recreation without technology really is possible and not everyone is a winner. On the chessboard you have to win the prize. The kids totally get that.

Chess is a very insular world in many respects and I believe if we are to continue growing the game, we have to open it up much more. There is much more scope for playing chess in public places. My recent articles about playing Karpov in a city square in France show what can be done. Who knows how many new members we can get for our clubs and federation as a spin-off from actively opening up the sport to everyone. We know that chess *is* for all, but do we make it accessible for all? There are people out there who will love chess, but they just don't know it yet. Have you ever walked out of a shop having purchased stuff you never knew you even wanted?

It is important for me to listen. I know that chess players can be an odd lot (in the nicest possible way, and I include myself). Most just want to play chess, and play as cheaply as possible. Yet nothing happens without organisers. From club and county chess to tournaments locally, not to mention the 4NCL and the British Championships, without those stalwart heroes who give their time and expertise (we all know who you are), we would all be in front of a screen playing chess. Let's take stock and think about those organisers. Personally, I don't believe for one moment that they get the real credit that they deserve and probably never have.

Some people believe in chess fairies. The ones that book venues, do the advertising and put out chess sets, boards, clocks, tables and chairs out of the goodness of their heart. No, it takes organisation and motivated people. Such people seem harder to come by. Few people want to be a secretary, chairman or treasurer these days, especially the younger folks.

The Long Library at Blenheim Palace where Sarah Longson gave a simul against many of the participants in the English Girls Championship and, yes, she did have to walk a long way.

Elis and Imogen Dicen of Coventry starred at Blenheim Palace, Elis (left) winning the Under-9 and Under-11 titles, while top seed Imogen became the Under-18 English Girls Champion.

There are so many possibilities to promote chess. From organising events at your local club, park or town square in the summer or even your local castle. I would ask people to bring chess wherever they have the captive audience of the general public. I don't see much chess played in shopping centres, libraries, cafes or care homes. Can we not make a national and targeted effort to do this?

People generally require support and guidance. I am happy to help! I cannot solve everyone's problems, but I can certainly draw on my experience and that of other organisers to help you run your own event. The ECF can advise and publicise, and I am sure there are people who would donate prizes for simuls and competitions, etc. Give it some thought. True, I want the ECF membership base to grow, but first I want to bring chess to people who have not had the opportunity or the desire to find the game – and I know there are many out there that share the same wish.

It's nearly 2020. My mantra for those we might want to attract to chess is: 'Get off your couch and into the game!. Chess is after all one of the greatest gifts that anyone can give us.

Is Grabbing Gary Good?

Junior Tay ponders what we should do when the opponent dangles the g-pawn

In a recent Australian weekender in Queensland, I had just completed my game against a junior and the boy's coach, a FIDE Master, joined in the post mortem. We were discussing the position in the first diagram below.

J.Tay-E.Wang
Leo Wilkinson Memorial, Rothwell 2019
Vienna Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 f4 d5 4 fxe5 ♘xe4 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 ♗b5 ♗g4 7 0-0 ♘xc3?! 8 bxc3 ♗e7 9 ♕e1 0-0 10 ♕g3!?

A speculative pawn sacrifice.

10...♗xf3 11 ♖xf3 ♗h4 12 ♕h3

Eschewing the draw after 12 ♕f4 ♗g5 13 ♕g3 ♗h4, and so on.

Now, Black took the pawn with **12...♘xe5** and my pieces started swarming all over the kingside after **13 ♖f5 ♗f6** (13...♘g6! is better) **14 d4 ♘g6 15 ♗d2 c6** (15...c5! gives credence to the maxim of creating action in the centre when faced with a flank attack) **16 ♗d3 ♕c8 17 ♕h5 ♕d8 18 ♖af1 ♖e8 19 g4 ♘f8 20 ♕h3 ♕d7 21 ♕f3**. Black had no good way of warding off the g4-g5 battering ram and he went down in 36 moves.

Back to the position in question, the boy's coach opined that perhaps Black should not capture the e-pawn as doing so gave me tempi to transfer my pieces to the kingside easily: for example, ♖f5 hits the e5-knight and prepares ♖h5, while d2-d4 bolsters the centre and prepares the development of the remaining two sleeping pieces.

Now if you were to check this position with an engine, it will declare that taking the e5-pawn gives Black a slight advantage (if you get it to analyse long enough), while ignoring it gives White '+1' advantage. Even so, the trainer's advice does have its logic. If the pawn was declined, I would not be able to conduct a full-scale kingside attack where Black's defensive task is extremely arduous.

Apart from taking on e5, the other sensible choice would be to play 12...d4 in an attempt to exploit White's lack of development. After 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 White must find 14 ♕g4!.

I am not sure if I would have seen this though (things get harder when White tries to steal the d4-pawn with 14 ♖d3 c5 15 ♕g4; more likely, though, the game would have continued 15 ♗a3 ♗e7 16 ♖f1 ♕d5 17 cxd4 ♖ae8 18 ♕e3 cxd4 19 ♗xe7 dxe3 20 ♖xd5 ♖xe7 21 d4 f6 when Black is only marginally worse), and then 14...♗e7 (not 14...dxc3? as 15 d3 f5 16 ♕c4+ ♔h8 17 ♗e3 gives White a huge advantage) 15 d3 ♕c8 16 ♕xd4 ♕e6 17 ♗f4 a6 18 c4 when White has a large advantage, albeit nothing decisive and there is still a lot of chess left to play.

The key thing after 12...d4 is that White, unlike in the game continuation, has no automatic moves and would be forced to calculate a lot more. So there is something to be said for not taking the pawn even if the computer is suspicious of that decision. We are human after all.

That should have been the end of the matter, but one week later, in the Queensland Championships, I was watching the round 6 encounter between IM Stephen Solomon and Igor Paevskiy, when the latter decided to sacrifice his g-pawn to clear the file against the white king after 15...♘c6!?.

The same question arises again. Should Solomon grab the g-pawn and then try to hold the fort after Black castles long? My immediate instinct was not to tempt fate and look for alternatives. White does have hopeless queenside pawns, but he still possesses the bishop-pair. I asked my chess 'kakis' ('buddies' in Singlish) for their opinions on this matter. Here's the result of their assessment.

IM Hsu Li Yang and IM Kevin Goh Wei Ming concurred that White should grab the pawn and weather the oncoming pressure. Hsu felt that if White doesn't do so, he is left with an inferior game and so White might as well bag the pawn first and try to 'tahan' ('to hold out' in Singlish). Goh indicates that the pawn grab is justifiable as White can find counterplay with ideas like ♕h6 and f4-f5, with the idea of ♗g5 or ♗f4. Meanwhile, IM Terry Toh, FM Mark Ong and NM Olimpiu Urcan refused to munch Gary, preferring to activate the bishop-pair by returning the pawn immediately with 16 f5!?.

In the game proper, Solomon took on g7, but did not succeed in quelling Black's initiative and the young Igor brilliantly upset the IM through forceful and confident play:

16 ♕xg7!?

The principled continuation and the one favoured by the stronger IMs in my gang, but White must play extremely precisely after this just to hold the balance.

I was with those who preferred returning the pawn with 16 f5 ♕xe5 17 ♕xe5 (17 fxe6 0-0 18 ♖xf7 ♕xg3 19 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 20 hxg3 ♘e5 seems dynamically equal; although White has the bishop-pair, it is easier for Black to play this position thanks to White's isolanis all over the board) 17...♘xe5 18 ♗f4 ♘d7 19 fxe6 ♘f6! 20 exf7+ ♔xf7 with equal chances.

Stockfish showed another alternative with 16 ♗f3 0-0-0 17 f5 h6 18 ♗g4 ♔b8 19

fxe6 fxe6 20 ♗xe6 g5, deeming that Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

16...0-0-0

17 ♗f3?!

Amazingly this is an inaccuracy. White needs to make full use of the f-file to generate counterplay. Moreover, it is imperative that White shores up the g-pawn instead with 17 ♖f2!?. The point of delaying ♗f3 takes shape after 17...h5 (17...♖dg8 18 ♕f6 h5 19 f5 is also good for White after 19...♕xe5 20 ♗g5, while the craziest line spouted by *Stockfish* is 17...♖hg8 18 ♕xh7 ♘e7! 19 ♕xf7 ♕c6! 20 ♗f3 ♖d1+ 21 ♗xd1 ♖xg2+ 22 ♔f1 ♖g1+ 23 ♔e2 ♕e4+ 24 ♗e3 ♘f5 25 ♕xe6+ ♔b8 26 ♕e8+ ♗c8 27 ♖f3 ♕xc4+ 28 ♔d2 ♕d5+ 29 ♔e2 ♕c4+ with a draw by repetition – that's Elo 3400 level chess for you) 18 f5! ♖hg8 and now IM Kevin Goh's idea of 19 ♕h6 (19 ♕f6 ♘xe5 20 ♗f4 ♕c6 21 ♗g3 also works) 19...♘xe5 20 ♗f4 gives White the initiative.

17...♖dg8 18 ♕f6 h5 19 ♖f2 ♖h7!

Preparing to redirect the knight to f5 via e7, so the f-pawn needs protection.

20 f5!?

Solomon decided it is high time to return the pilfered pawn and get the bishop out.

20...♕xe5 21 ♗g5 ♕xf6 22 ♗xf6 ♖h6 23 ♗h4?!

Igor later indicated to me that Solomon missed his chance here with 23 fxe6! ♖xf6 24 ♗xc6 ♖xf2 25 ♗xb7+ ♔xb7 26 ♔xf2 fxe6, when White is OK in the rook ending.

23...♘e5!

Now Black's initiative cannot be parried.

24 ♗xb7+ ♔xb7

25 ♖d1?

White had to try 25 fxe6!? ♖xe6 26 ♖f5 ♘xc4 27 ♖xh5 ♖e2 to retain any defensive chances.

25...♔c6!

By covering the d7-square, Black frees up his knight for its lunch.

26 ♗g3 ♘xc4 27 fxe6 fxe6 28 ♖f7 h4 29 ♗f2 a5 30 ♖f4 ♘e5 31 ♖e4 ♖h5 32 a4 ♖hg5 33 ♔f1 ♖8g6 34 ♗xh4 ♖f5+ 35 ♗f2??

35 ♔g1 ♘f3+ 36 ♔h1 ♘xh4 37 ♖xh4 ♖f2 is bad for White, but at least he would still be in the game.

35...♘g4! 36 ♖d2 ♘xh2+ 37 ♔e1 e5 38 ♖h4 ♘g4 39 ♖h7 ♘f6 40 ♗h4 ♘xh7 41 ♗f2 ♘f6 0-1

Did Solomon make a bad decision on g7? The two strongest players in my group (IM Goh and Hsu are rated 2400+) have decided that they would do likewise, but Goh is a very concrete player who makes decisions more on calculation and Hsu is legendary in Singapore chess circles as a superb defender.

Let's discuss the pawn sacrifice in terms of soundness, the subsequent play after accepting/declining the pawn, the time remaining, psychology and, finally, the tournament situation.

Soundness

By sacrificing the pawn, Black not only opens the g-file for his rooks, but he also gets to march his h-pawn, with considerable pressure on the white kingside. Moreover, White has a pretty useless dark-squared bishop, which only can be freed by returning the extra pawn with f4-f5 (weakening and thus damning the e-pawn in the process). So without a doubt, Igor's pawn sacrifice was sound and justified.

Subsequent Ease/Difficulty of Play

After accepting the pawn, Black has a powerful initiative and White has to play extremely accurately to hold the balance. The computer shows only one long and tough path to equality, whereas the other variations give White a torrid time. On the other hand, declining the pawn and counter-sacrificing the e-pawn allows White to mobilise the bishop-pair, though the weak white kingside pawns still give Black equality. The position is also then more simplified and easier for both sides to calculate, so both sides are likely to play reasonably well and my take is that the game would be likely to end in a draw assuming nobody makes a major blunder.

Time remaining

After Solomon swiped off Gary, he had 40 minutes left (after using up 50 minutes on the first 17 moves), while Igor had only used up 16 minutes and thus had more than an hour to spare. Both sides therefore had ample time to work out the subsequent chaos. Interestingly, Solomon used up 9 minutes to decide on the pawn grab.

Tournament Situation and Psychology

Prior to the game, Stephen had a 6/6 perfect score against Igor and thus should have had a good grasp of the youngster's strengths and weaknesses. However, he had fallen off the pace of contending for the Queensland title when he lost in rounds 3 and 4 to IM Brodie McClymont and English GM Daniel Fernandez. Igor, on the other hand, was the twelfth seed in the event and after losing to Fernandez in round 2, went on a four-game winning streak (which was extended after he took out Solomon).

Moreover, Igor was undaunted by the encounter of tussling with Solomon, despite spotting 300+ ELO points and the six consecutive losses. Last year, he had GM Suat Atalik on the ropes from the black side of the Benko Gambit and the experienced GM had to pull out all the stops to make a draw. So Solomon probably felt he had to go for it, hoping that Igor would misplay the subsequent attack, when White could use his experience to navigate his way through.

Conclusion

I suppose there is no right or wrong answer here. The majority of chess players do better with the initiative and feel less comfortable defending. However, there is a case for taking risks when one needs to try to garner every available point, just as chess professionals often do, even in worse positions.

In a future article I will bring forth similar examples known to opening theory and discuss the situation of whether grabbing Gary should be considered. For now though, most chess-playing Brits simply must be aware of the following game where Nigel Short's Sicilian Sozin finally felled Kasparov's seemingly impenetrable Najdorf in the PCA World Championship.

Going Where Few Men Dare...

N.Short-G.Kasparov
World Championship (Game 16), London 1993
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 ♗b3 b5 8 0-0 ♗e7 9 ♕f3 ♕c7 10 ♕g3 ♘c6 11 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 12 ♖e1 ♗b7

Now Short probably didn't hesitate before playing his next move, especially against the world's best player.

13 a3 ♖d8 14 f3

In *Informant 59*, Short analysed 14 ♕xg7? ♖g8 15 ♕h6 d5! and the d-pawn cannot be swiped because of 16 exd5? ♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 ♖xd5 and Black is already winning.

14...0-0 15 ♗h6 ♘e8 16 ♔h1 ♔h8 17 ♗g5 ♗xg5 18 ♕xg5 ♘f6 19 ♖ad1 ♖d7 20 ♖d3 ♖fd8 21 ♖ed1 ♕c5 22 ♕e3 ♔g8

Speelman pointed out that after 22...♕xe3 23 ♖xe3 d5 24 exd5 ♘xd5 25 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 26 ♖ed3 ♗c6 27 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 28 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 29 c4! ♔g8 30 c5 White is better.

23 ♔g1 ♔f8

Kasparov is losing ground and Short demonstrated that he really had to prefer 23...♕xe3+ 24 ♖xe3 ♔f8.

24 ♕f2 ♗a8?! 25 ♘e2 g6?

It was the last chance to remove the queens.

26 ♘d4! ♕e5

26...e5 27 ♖c3! ♕a7 28 ♘c6 ♕xf2+ 29 ♔xf2 ♖c8? 30 ♘xe5 wins, as shown by Short.

27 ♖e1 g5 28 c3 ♔g7 29 ♗c2 ♖g8 30 ♘b3 ♔f8 31 ♖d4 ♔e7 32 a4! h5? 33 axb5 axb5 34 ♖b4 h4 35 ♘d4 g4 36 ♖xb5 d5 37 ♕xh4 ♕h5 38 ♘f5+! 1-0

And Black gave up in view of 38...exf5 39 exf5+ ♔f8 40 ♕xf6 ♗b7 41 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 42 ♕d8+ ♔g7 43 f6+ ♔h8 44 ♕xg8+ ♔xg8 45 ♖e8#.

In the above position after 12....♗b7, not many grandmasters have dared to take the g7-pawn and weather the subsequent heat from the heavy-piece battery. According to the ChessBase Online Database, only four GMs have done so: Ivanchuk (why are we not surprised?), Kiril Georgiev, Degrave and Nijboer. Most of the games contested in the pawn-grab lines are, unsurprisingly, from correspondence praxis, but what if you do a thorough study of the line and know the defensive nuances inside out?

Is it worth the trouble grovelling for most of the game for one measly pawn and, even then, can one convert the ending? Well, the Suffolk IM Adam Hunt did just that. Black had his chances in the following game, but you just have to admire White's grit.

'You really want to play that?' thinks Garry, but the boot was on the other foot come Game 16.

A.Hunt-A.Collinson
4NCL, West Bromwich 2004
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 0-0 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗e7 9 ♕f3 ♕c7 10 ♕g3 ♘c6 11 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 12 ♖e1 ♗b7 13 ♕xg7!?

Hunt wants his opponent to prove that the line-clearance is worth a pawn. Compared to the Solomon-Paevskiy game, the compensation looks even more compelling as there is a potential long-diagonal battery and White's counterplay (either doubling on the d-file or attempting to push e4-e5 or f4-f5) looks light years away.

13...♖g8 14 ♕h6 0-0-0 15 ♕h3 ♔b8 16 a3 ♖g6 17 ♖e2 ♖dg8 18 f3 h5 19 ♔h1 ♕e8

Vuckovic noted that 19...h4!? 20 ♗e3 ♘h5 21 ♖d1 ♕e8 offers Black sufficient compensation for his material deficit, citing Saenko-Yamaliev, correspondence 2010. However it seems that Black can make headway with 22 ♔g1 (after 22 ♖ed2 ♗c8! the threat of ...e5, uncovering the bishop against the queen, forces White to sacrifice the exchange on d6 or play 23 f4 when Black has 23...♘g3+!) 22...♗f6 23 ♖xd6 and now, instead of Yamaliev's 23...♕e7 24 ♖ed2, stronger is 23...♗e5!. Black aims to annex the dark squares with the queen and bishop after 24 ♖d1 ♕e7 25 ♔f1 ♕f6 26 ♖d3 ♘f4 27 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 when *Stockfish* even gives a '+2' advantage, despite Black's two-pawn deficit.

20 ♗d2

20 ♗e3 h4 21 ♖d1 ♘h5 transposes back to Saeko-Yamaliev.

20...h4! 21 f4

Hunt has completed his development and reckons his chances lie in advancing his pawn centre, which is not a bad policy given that Black's flank pressure is becoming extremely strong and that 21 ♕xh4 fails to 21...♘xe4.

21...d5?!

A logical way to free up the long white diagonal, but this gives White the chance to prise open the centre.

The incredible 21...♘xe4!! wins because after 22 ♘xe4 ♖xg2!! 23 ♖xg2 ♗xe4 24 ♖ag1 ♕c6...

...White is in absolute zugzwang despite having an extra rook. The two bishops simply cannot do anything about the threat of ...♗d8-b6xg1: for example, 25 f5 exf5 26 ♗e3 ♗d8 27 ♗xf7 ♖xg2 28 ♖xg2 ♕xc2 29 ♗g1 ♕c1 30 ♕e3 ♕xe3 31 ♗xe3 h3 and wins. Instead, trying with 25 ♗e3 to cover the g1-a7 diagonal runs into 25...♗f5 26 ♗a7+ when Black can even arrogantly decline the desperado bishop with 26...♔b7! 27 ♕c3 ♕e4 and there's no way to stop ...h4-h3, as 28 h3 ♖g3 is another sad kill.

22 f5! ♖g4 23 exd5?!

This is a less effective central trade as the bishop on b3 has less impact on the battle (it cannot prevent ...d4). Instead, 23 fxe6!? fxe6 24 exd5 is about equal and now if 24...exd5 25 ♖ae1 ♖xg2 26 ♖xg2, Black doesn't have the diagonal-clearing 26...d4? since White can calmly play 27 ♗xg8.

23...exd5 24 ♕e3?

This is very logical, gaining time in an attempt to close the h1-a8 diagonal after a subsequent ...d4, but it isn't enough. As such, White's best chance lay in 24 ♖ae1 ♖xg2 25 ♖xg2 d4 26 ♖xe7 ♗xg2+ 27 ♕xg2 ♕xe7 28 ♕f3 dxc3 29 ♗f4+ ♔c8 30 ♕c6+ ♔d8 31 ♕b6+ ♔d7 32 ♕b7+ ♔e8 33 ♕b8+ ♕d8 34 ♕e5+ ♔f8 35 ♗h6+ ♖g7 36 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 37 ♕xc3, with some chances to draw.

24...d4! 25 ♕e5+ ♔a8 26 ♘d5

White is relying on this block to save his gizzard. Now it is left to see if Black can find the kill or allow White to hoover pieces off the board and remain a pawn up.

26...♗d8?

After conducting the attack excellently, Black finally falters and decides to allow the trade of queens, trusting in his ongoing pressure.

Collinson missed the powerful 26...♕c6!! and it is all over as there is no way to alleviate the extreme pressure along the long white diagonal: 27 ♘xe7 (or 27 h3 ♖g3) is met by 27...♕xg2+! 28 ♖xg2 ♗xg2+ 29 ♔g1 ♗e4+ 30 ♕g3 ♖xg3+! 31 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 32 ♔f2 ♖g2+ 33 ♔f1 ♖xd2 and Black is winning.

27 ♕xe8 ♘xe8 28 h3 ♖g3 29 ♘f4!

Preparing to trade bishops on the long light-squared diagonal and finally ease the extreme pressure down the g-file. White has to return his extra pawn to achieve this though.

IM Adam Hunt - a braver man than Nigel Short. Adam plays the Najdorf as Black and was happy to boldly grab on g7 against it.

29...♘d6 30 ♗d5 ♗xd5 31 ♘xd5 ♘xf5

Hunt has been on the extreme defensive since move 13, but now he switches gears and starts to apply pressure to Black's weak pawns.

32 ♗f4 ♖3g6 33 a4 ♔b7 34 axb5 axb5 35 ♖e5

With four isolanis, from a positional standpoint, Black is suffering unless he is a computer engine and can use tactics to justify any equal assessment.

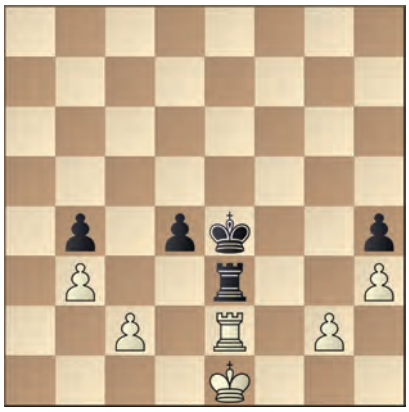
35...♘d6?!

The f-pawn is untenable after this. The cold-blooded *Stockfish* points out that 35...♘g3+! 36 ♔g1 f6 37 ♖e6 f5 keeps the pawn intact.

36 ♘e7 ♗xe7 37 ♖xe7+ ♔b6 38 ♗xd6 ♖xd6

Hunt is a pawn up again, and with reduced material on the board. According to the engine, Black held out perfectly for the next 20 moves with an assessment of absolute parity.

39 ♖xf7 ♖e6 40 ♖f2 ♖ge8 41 ♖d2 ♔c5 42 ♔g1 ♖e4 43 ♖f1 ♔c4 44 ♖f7 ♖8e7 45 ♖f3 b4 46 ♔f2 ♖e8 47 b3+ ♔d5 48 ♖f7 ♖8e7 49 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 50 ♔f3 ♖g7 51 ♔f2 ♔e4 52 ♖e2+ ♔f4 53 ♔e1 ♖g3 54 ♔d2 ♔f5 55 ♔e1 ♔f4 56 ♔f1 ♖c3 57 ♖d2 ♔e3 58 ♖f2 ♔e4 59 ♔e1 ♖e3+ 60 ♖e2



60...d3??

The assumption that the h4-pawn is holding back White's h- and g-pawns isn't correct as Hunt now demonstrates.

Black must leave the d-pawn alone: for example, with 60...♔f5 to maintain the balance followed by shuffling the rook between g3 and c3. The key point is that it does White no good to trade rooks in this position: for example, 61 ♖xe3 dxe3 62 ♔f1 ♔f4 63 ♔e2 ♔e4 and he cannot make progress.

61 cxd3+ ♔xd3 62 ♖xe3+ ♔xe3 63 ♔f1! ♔d3 64 g4! hxg3 65 h4

White has conducted the pawn endgame precisely and it's all over.

65...♔e4 66 ♔g2 ♔f4 67 h5 ♔g5 68 ♔xg3 ♔xh5 69 ♔f4 ♔g6 70 ♔e5 ♔f7 71 ♔d6 ♔e8 72 ♔c5 ♔d7 73 ♔xb4 ♔c6 74 ♔a5 ♔b7 75 ♔b5 ♔a7 76 ♔c6 1-0

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It *is* a very Large Board

Always pay attention to the whole board, as Amatzia Avni demonstrates

There are 64 squares on the chessboard, but the action in a practical game, at any single moment, usually only occurs on a narrow part of it. This is doubly true when we observe the movement of a single piece, so it is instructive to watch action on a large scale.

In our first diagram we witness a single knight handle numerically far superior forces.

D. Eschbach
1st-2nd H.M., *Schach*, 2010

White to play and draw

1 ♗d7! e5 2 ♗e8 ♗h5 3 ♗d7 ♗e8! 4 ♗xe8 ♕c8+ 5 ♔b6+ ♕xe8

The introduction is over. Black has succeeded in avoiding the mating threats against his king and is left with a vast material advantage, but...

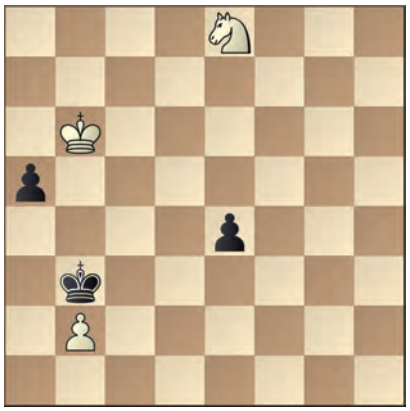
6 ♘c3+ ♔b4 7 ♘d5+ ♔c4 8 ♘e3+ ♔d4 9 ♘f5+ ♔d5

And not 9...♔e4? 10 ♘d6+.

10 c4+ ♔xc4

10...♔e6 11 ♘g7+ and 10...♔e4 11 ♘d6+ would again cost Black his queen.

11 ♘d6+ ♔b3 12 ♘xe8 e4



The danger has not passed yet for White, whose knight has to confront the advanced pawns.

13 ♘d6 e3 14 ♘f5 e2 15 ♘d4+ ♔xb2 16 ♘xe2 a4 17 ♘f4 a3 18 ♘d3+ ♔c3

Now it's an obvious draw, as is 18...♔b1 19 ♘b4.

19 ♘c1

If one knight causes so much trouble, just imagine what three(!) knights might do.

T. Gorgiev
(Correction by M. Garcia, 2012)
Special Prize,
Alma Atinskaja Pravda, 1969

Black to play, White wins

1...♕xa4+

If 1...♕f4?! 2 ♘d7+ ♔a8 3 ♗e1 or 1...e1♕ 2 ♗xe1 a2 (White also wins after 2...♕e2 3 ♘xc6+ ♔xc8 4 ♘d6+ ♔c7 5 ♘b5+ ♕xb5+ 6 axb5 a2 7 ♗c3) 3 ♘d7+ ♔xc8 4 ♘b6+ axb6+ 5 ♔xb6.

2 ♔xa4 a2 3 ♘d7+ ♔xc8 4 ♘d6+ ♔c7 5 e8♘+! ♔xd7 6 f8♘+ ♔e7

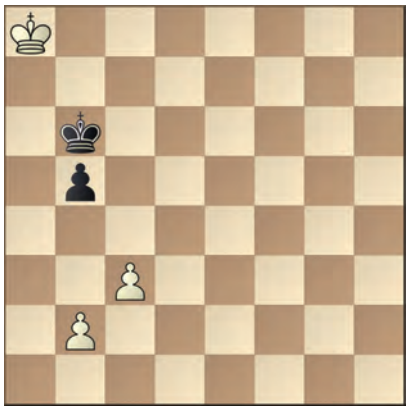
7 f6+! ♔xf8 8 ♗h6+ ♔g8 9 f7+ ♔h7 10 f8♘+ ♔xh6 11 ♘f7+ ♔h5 12 ♘f6+ ♔h4 13 ♘xg6+ ♔h3 14 ♘g5+ ♔g2 15 ♘f4+ ♔f2 16 ♘g4+

The trio of knights remain immune and mate is now imminent.

16...♔e1 17 ♘f3+ ♔d1 18 ♘e3+ ♔c1 19 ♘d3+ ♔b1 20 ♘d2+ ♔a1 21 ♘c2#

Next, we see a king journey. In an apparently very simple pawn ending, the white king is required to walk east, then south, and finally west, in order to bring home the full point.

N. Grigoriev
1st H.M., *64*, 1930



White to play and win

1 b3!

Avoiding 1 b4? ♔a6! 2 ♔b8 ♔b6 3 ♔c8 ♔c6 and 1 ♔b8? b4! 2 c4 b3!, when Black draws.

1...♔a5

White wins easily after 1...♔a6 2 b4! ♔b6 3 ♔b8 ♔a6 (or 3...♔c6 4 ♔a7) 4 ♔c7 and 1...b4 2 c4.

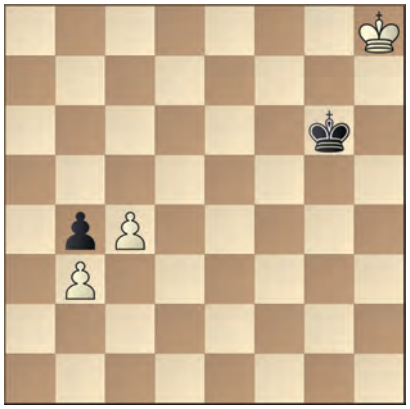
2 ♔b8!

And not 2 b4+? ♔a6! or 2 ♔b7? b4! 3 c4, which is stalemate.

2...b4

A much better try than 2...♔b6 3 b4 or 2...♔a6 3 ♔c7.

3 c4 ♔b6 4 ♔c8 ♔c6 5 ♔d8 ♔d6 6 ♔e8 ♔e6 7 ♔f8 ♔f6 8 ♔g8 ♔g6 9 ♔h8!



By now, the kings are so far away from the pawns that Black cannot continue to imitate White, for if 9...♔h6? then 10 c5 decides.

9...♔f6!

For the time being, Black keeps the opposition.

10 ♔h7 ♔f7 11 ♔h6 ♔f6 12 ♔h5 ♔f5 13 ♔h4 ♔f4 14 ♔h3! ♔f5

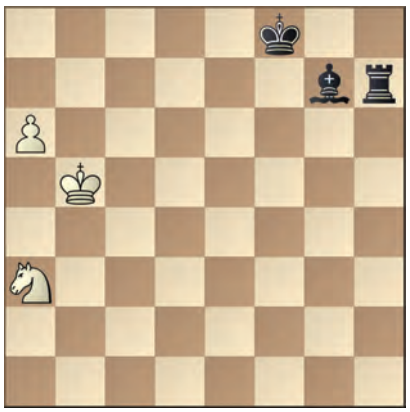
Once again, the kings are far away so that 14...♔f3? fails to 15 c5.

15 ♔g3 ♔g5 16 ♔f3 ♔f5 17 ♔e3 ♔e5 18 ♔d3 ♔d6 19 ♔d4

And the b4-pawn will fall, with an easy win.

Another arduous but fruitful king journey occurs in the following study.

V. Anufriev
4th to 6th prizes, Georgia AT,
Shakhmatna Skladba, 1982



White to play and win

1 a7 ♖h5+ 2 ♔a4!

Black escapes with a draw after 2 ♔a6? ♖h6+ 3 ♔b7 ♖b6+ 4 ♔xb6 ♗d4+.

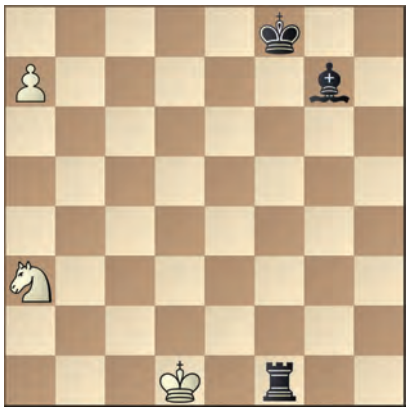
2...♖h4+ 3 ♔b3 ♖h3+ 4 ♔a2 ♖h2+ 5 ♔b1 ♖h1+ 6 ♔c2 ♖h2+ 7 ♔d1 ♖h1+ 8 ♔e2 ♖h2+ 9 ♔f1 ♖h1+

If 9...♖f2+ 10 ♔g1.

10 ♔g2 ♖g1+ 11 ♔f3! ♖f1+ 12 ♔e2 ♖f2+ 13 ♔d1!

But not 13 ♔e1? ♗c3+ 14 ♔d1 ♖d2+ when Black even wins.

13...♖f1+



14 ♔c2

All the way to the queenside again, now that the black rook has been transferred from the h-file to the f-file.

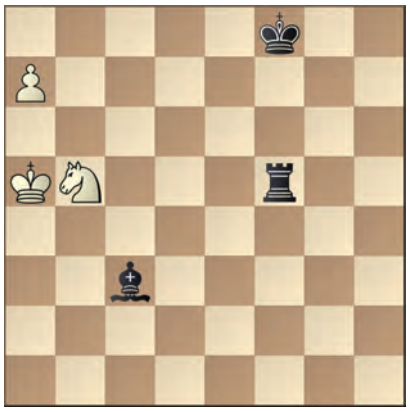
14...♖f2+ 15 ♔b3 ♖f3+ 16 ♔a4!

Heading north, and not 16 ♔b4? ♗c3+.

16...♖f4+ 17 ♔b5 ♖f5+ 18 ♔a6 ♖f6+ 19 ♔a5

Possible now that ...♗c3+ is no longer available.

19...♖f5+ 20 ♘b5 ♗c3+



21 ♔a4!

Precise to the very end. Black draws after 21 ♔a6? ♖f6+ 22 ♔b7 ♖f7+ 23 ♘c7 ♗e5 24 a8♕+ ♔g7.

21...♖f4+ 22 ♔a3!

Further accuracy. 22 ♔b3? ♖b4+ 23 ♔a3 ♖xb5 24 a8♕+ ♔e7 25 ♕c6 ♖a5+ 26 ♔b3 ♗e5! 27 ♕b7+ ♔d8! 28 ♕b6+ ♗c7 is again only a draw.

22...♗b2+ 23 ♔b3!

And, finally, the pawn will queen.

The bishop may also produce wonders.

E. Melnichenko
Comm., Fritz MT,
Ceskoslovensky Sach, 2012

White to play and draw

1 ♗f4+

Black wins after 1 ♔b7? ♖xf2 2 ♗xh2 ♗xh2 3 ♖xh2 ♗b5 4 ♗e4 ♗e2 5 ♔c6 ♗xg4.

1...♔f6 2 ♕e3!

If 2 ♗e3? ♖xf2 3 ♗xf2 ♗xf2+ 4 ♔a6 ♗g1.

2...♖e1!

2...♗xe3+ 3 ♗xe3 ♖xh1 4 ♗d4+ leads to perpetual check.

3 ♗e5+

Side-stepping 3 ♔b7? ♗xe3 4 ♖xe1 ♗xf4 and 3 ♖xh2? ♗xe3+ 4 ♗xe3 ♖xe3.

3...♔e7 4 ♕d4 ♖d1

4...g6? 5 ♗d6+ ♔d8 6 ♔b8 ♗xd4 7 ♗c7+ ♔e7 8 ♖xe1+ would win for White.

5 ♗d6+ ♔d8 6 ♕c5!

Carrying on the systematic movement, and not 6 ♗c5+? ♖xd4 7 ♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 8 ♔a6 ♗g1.

6...♗xc5+

Of course, not 6...♖c1?? 7 ♗e7#.

7 ♗xc5 ♖xh1 8 ♗b6+ ♔e7

And now it's time to go all the way back – which draws.

9 ♗c5+ ♔f6 10 ♗d4+ ♔g5 11 ♗e3+ ♔h4 12 ♗f2+

Let's now watch a rook making a long trip.

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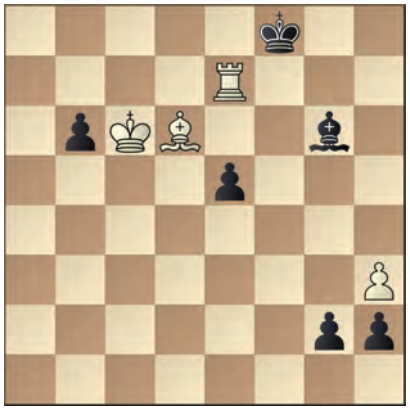
www.chess.co.uk

D. Gurgenidze
Tidskrift for Schack, 1984



White to play and draw

1 ♖g7+!
Not 1 ♖xe5+? ♔g8! or 1 ♖a7+? ♔g8 2 ♖g7+ ♔h8 when Black wins.
1...♔e8
If 1...♔xg7 2 ♗xe5+ and 3 ♗xh2.
2 ♖e7+ ♔d8 3 ♖d7+ ♔c8 4 ♖c7+ ♔b8 5 ♖b7+
5 ♖g7+? ♔a8 6 ♖g8+ ♔a7 7 ♗b8+ ♔a6 8 ♗xe5 ♗e4+ is hopeless for White.
5...♔a8 6 ♖b8+
Now he starts checking along the file.
6...♔a7 7 ♖b7+ ♔a6 8 ♖xb6+ ♔a5 9 ♖b5+ ♔a4 10 ♖b4+ ♔a3 11 ♖b2+!
An echo of his first move, and not 11 ♖b8+? ♔a2 12 ♖b2+ ♔a1!.
11...♔a4 12 ♖b4+ ♔a3 13 ♖b2+!
The draw becomes clear as 13...♔xb2 will be met by 14 ♗xe5+ followed by 15 ♗xh2.

Next the queen visits all four corners of the board.

J. Dobrusky
1st prize, *Schachmatnoje Obosrenie*, 1901

Mate in four

1 ♕a8
Threatening 2 ♕e8+!.
1...♘e6 2 ♕h8+ ♘g7
If 2...♔xd5 3 ♗c6# or 2...♔f5 3 ♕f6#.
3 ♕h1! ♗xd5
This protects e4, but takes the flight square on d5 from the black king.
4 ♕a1#

It is not easy to find games where the action spread over the whole board. In his book *Timman's Titans* (New in Chess, 2016), the author marvels at Alekhine's skill in playing on both wings. Commenting on Duras-Alekhine, Mannheim 1914...

...Timman notes that on the 27th move, "The battle is (even) waged on *three* fronts".

An example of switching from one flank to the other is the following:

E.Grünfeld-S.Tarrasch
Baden-Baden 1925
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 e3 ♗f5 4 cxd5 cxd5 5 ♕b3 ♕d7 6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♘f3 f6 8 ♗e2 ♗g6 9 ♗d2 ♘c6 10 ♘a4 ♗d6 11 ♖c1 ♘ge7 12 ♘c5 ♗xc5 13 ♖xc5 0-0 14 0-0 ♖ac8 15 ♖fc1 ♔h8 16 h3 e5 17 ♗b5 e4 18 ♘h2 ♗f7 19 ♕a3
White exerts pressure on the queenside.
19...♕e6 20 ♖5c2 a6 21 ♗e2 ♔g8 22 b4

22...♘b8 23 b5 axb5 24 ♗xb5 ♖xc2 25 ♖xc2 ♘ec6 26 ♘f1 ♖c8 27 ♘g3 ♘d7 28 ♗e2 g6 29 ♕b2 ♖b8 30 a4 ♔g7 31 ♕b1 ♕d6 32 ♖b2
Targeting the weak, backward pawn in Black's camp, but for now there are sufficient defensive resources.
32...♕c7 33 ♘f1 f5 34 ♗e1 ♘f6 35 f4 ♘e8 36 g4

After a slow manoeuvring battle, White suddenly opens a second front on the kingside.
36...♘d6 37 ♘g3 ♗e6 38 gxf5 gxf5 39 ♗f1 ♖g8 40 ♔h2 ♔h8 41 ♕c2 ♕d7 42 ♕c5
Black can only react, having no real counterplay.
42...♖c8 43 ♕a3 ♗f7 44 ♕b3 ♘d8 45 ♖g2 ♘c4?
Cracking under the pressure by removing an important defender,
46 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 47 ♕a3 ♘e6 48 ♘xf5 ♖xa4 49 ♗h4! h6 50 ♕f8+! 1-0
In view of 50...♘xf8 51 ♗f6+ ♔h7 52 ♖g7+ ♔h8 53 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 54 ♘xh6#.

Games extending to the whole board frequently involve a king hunt. Famous examples are Kasparov-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1999, and Polugaevsky-Nezhmetdinov, USSR 1958, which are too well-known to reproduce here. But there are other good spectacles.

M.Rhode-Su.Polgar
Reshevsky Memorial,
New York 1992
English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 f5 4 d4 e4 5 ♘g5 h6 6 ♘h3 g5 7 ♘g1 ♗g7 8 e3 ♘f6 9 h4 ♔f7 10 ♘h3 ♔g6?! 11 f3 ♕e7 12 fxe4 ♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 14 ♗d3 ♕xg2

15 ♗xf5+! ♔xf5 16 ♖f1+ ♔e6 17 ♕h5 ♘e5 18 dxe5 ♗xe5 19 ♕f7+ ♔d6 20 ♖f6+ ♔c5 21 b4+ ♔xb4 22 ♗d2+

♔a3 23 c5 d5 24 cxd6 ♗g3+ 25 ♖f2 ♕h1+ 26 ♔e2 ♗g4+ 27 ♔d3 ♗d1

28 ♗c1+ ♔a4 29 ♕c4+ ♔a5 30 ♗d2+ 1-0

T.Petrosian-C.Guimard
Gothenburg Interzonal 1955

32 ♖xa5!

White accepts the invitation to capture the pawn. His rook will not get out alive, but he will obtain fine compensation.

32...♘a2 33 ♗d3 g6 34 ♕f3 ♕c7?! 35 ♖c5 ♗xc5 36 dxc5

The a1-h8 diagonal is opened.

36...♘ab4 37 ♗c4 f5 38 ♖e1 ♕e7 39 ♕e2 ♖e8 40 ♘f3 ♔h7 41 ♕e5 ♕c7 42 ♕e2 ♕e7 43 h4! The beginning of a fierce attack.

43...♘f6 44 ♗xe6 ♘e4 45 ♘d4 ♖bd8

If 45...♘xc5 46 ♗g8!+.

46 h5! ♖xd4 47 hxg6+ ♔xg6 48 ♗xf5+! ♔xf5

49 ♕h5+ ♔e6 50 ♕g4+

50 ♗xd4 ♔d7 51 f3 might be simpler.

50...♔d5 51 ♕f5+ ♕e5 52 ♕d7+ ♔xc5 53 ♖c1+ ♘c3 54 ♖xc3+ ♔b6 55 a5+

The black king will not find rest even on the queenside.

55...♔xa5 56 ♕a7+ ♔b5 57 ♕b7+ ♔a5 58 ♖c1 ♖d1+ 59 ♖xd1 ♕xb2 60 ♕a7+ ♘a6 61 b4+ ♔xb4 62 ♕b6+1-0

J.Xiong-Zhou Jianchao
Las Vegas 2014

There is not one piece, either Black or White, in the east half of the board.

30 c4 b4 31 ♕g3 ♕c7 32 c6 a3 33 bxa3 ♘c5 34 ♖g4

A dramatic transformation – a shift from the queenside to the kingside.

34...f5 35 ♘b5 ♕xg3 36 ♖xg3 ♖c8 37 c7 ♔f8?

37...f4 was required.

38 h4 f4 39 ♖f3 g5 40 hxg5 hxg5 41 g3 e5 42 gxf4 exf4 43 ♔h2 ♔g7 44 ♖g1 bxa3 45 ♖xg5+ ♔f6 46 ♖xc5 ♖h8+ 47 ♔g2 ♖hg8+ 48 ♔h3 a2

Black had pinned his hopes on this pawn, but White's attack comes first.

49 ♖xf4+ ♔e7

Trying to flee to the west.

50 ♖e4+ ♔d7 51 ♖d5+ ♔c8 52 ♖e7 ♖a6

53 ♘a7+! ♖xa7 54 ♖d8+ 1-0

If 54...♖xd8 55 cxd8♕+ ♔xd8 56 ♖xa7 a1♕ 57 ♖xa1. In this variation, the last move occurs in White's territory and, no less notably, the whole board was covered in this game.

A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

Peter Heine Nielsen - @PHChess
Chess should stop giving wildcards, but instead have a 'Wildcard-game'. It's a huge success in baseball with 2 teams having a single match to decide who enters the actual playoff. Adds extra excitement to kick off the event, and makes the wildcard less political. @FIDE_chess

Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen
Please save some of your brilliant ideas for IOM and London.

Chess.com - @chesscom
Congratulations to @MagnusCarlsen on an incredible 101 games without defeat! #iomchess

Tarjei J. Svensen - @TarjeiJS
Most classical games without a loss:

Carlsen:	100 (*)
Ding:	100
Tal:	95
Tal:	86
Kramnik:	82
Yue:	82
So:	67
Vachier-Lagrave:	67
Capablanca:	62
(Tiviakov & Lalic	110 games)

(source NiC 6/2019) * = *ongoing*

Douglas Griffin - @dgriffinchess
FIDE Rating list, 30 years ago - with the players' ages indicated.

1 Kasparov	2775 (26)
2 Karpov	2755 (38)
3 Short	2660 (24)
4 Ivanchuk	2660 (20)
5 Korchnoi	2655 (58)
6 Salov	2645 (25)
7 M. Gurevich	2640 (30)
8 Andersson	2635 (38)
9 Timman	2635 (37)
10 Ljubojevic	2635 (38).

Nigel Short - @nigelshortchess
England down Armenia 2.5-1.5 at the European Team Chess Championship! Well done boys!

David Howell - @DavidHowellGM
For anyone out there who loves discovering new games, and especially for those of you who love Chess and/or Poker, you should DEFINITELY check out this app. Happy to admit I've spent many hours trying to master this one! #chess #poker #boardgames #choker

Home News

BANGOR – John Cairns of Fruithill Chess Club, Belfast, triumphed with an unbeaten 5/6 at the Bangor Rapidplay on October 5th, which was sponsored by Mellons Hyundai. Sharing second, half a point behind, were Gabor Horvath (Strand), Michael Waters (Bray), Alex Goss (Dublin) and Walter Wilson (Newtownards), while Christopher Dorrian (Carrickfergus) won the Junior Championship with 5/6.

BIRMINGHAM – Warley Quinborne again hosted the Birmingham & District League Rapidplay on October 20th, where Mark Hebden once again proved too strong.
Open: 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 6/7, 2 Lawrence Cooper (Stafford) 5½, 3-6 Tomasz Sygnowski, Henrik Stepanyan (both Sutton Coldfield), Shabir Okhai (Syston), Andrew Brett (Norfolk) 4½.
Major: 1 Oleg Cukovs (Poulton-le-Fylde) 5½, 2-4 Shahab Quraishi (West Bromwich), Gheorghe Albu (Braunstone), Dustin Bowcott (Halesowen) 5.
Intermediate: 1 Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 6½, 2 Gary White (Telford) 6, 3-5 Steve Whatmore (Rugeley), Christopher Evans (King's Heath), Tony Shaw (Worcester) 5.
Minor: 1 Don Curry (Halesowen) 6, 2-4 Granville Hill (Leicester), Ansh Agrawal (Birmingham), Victor Brown (Walsall Kipping) 5½.

BOURNEMOUTH – There was a remarkable story at the Dorset Congress (11-13 October), which we'll have much more on in our Christmas pages. For now - the results:
Open: 1 Declan Lovelock (Southbourne) 4½/5, 2-3 Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Walter Saunders (Bath) 3½.
Major: 1-2 Frank Pittman (Weymouth), Matthew Wilson (Teignmouth) 4, 3-5 Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Richard Smith (Poole), Jon Catchpole (Southbourne) 3½.
Intermediate: 1 Rob McClatchey (Salisbury) 4½, 2-5 Srivathsa Venkataramanan (London), John Belinger (New Milton), Paul Jackson (Bournemouth), Peter Land (Hanham) 3½.
Minor: 1 Graeme Ford (Salisbury) 4½, 2-5 Jennifer Goldsmith (Harrow), Tim Jones (New Milton), Peter Harrington (Blackburn), George Holden (Purbeck) 4.

BRADFORD – Leading local player Phil Watson drew with Adam Ashton in the final round as the pair shared first place at the Bradford Congress (13-15 September).
Open: 1-2 Adam Ashton (3Cs), Phil Watson (Bradford) 4/5, 3-7 Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Matthew Parsons (Hebden Bridge), Jim Burnett (Doncaster), Peter Shaw (Wakefield), Robert Starley (Leeds) 3½.
Major: 1-4 Tim Spanton (Battersea), Marek Soszynski (Sutton Coldfield), Stephen Stokes (Bury), Yasser Tello (Wimbledon) 4.
Minor: 1-2 Vivien Webster (Halifax), David Ashton (Pensby) 4½, 3 David Buckell (Clitheroe) 4.

BUDE – These days GM John Nunn is a member of Bude Chess Club and he won the Peter and Peggy Clarke Memorial Rapidplay in Bude with a perfect 6/6 on September 14th. Another contestant was Peggy Clarke's brother, Phil Wood, who you may recall was interviewed by Ben Graff in the August *CHESS*, while second place back on 4½ points was shared between Matthew Wilson (Teignmouth) and Giles Body (Exeter).

A summery John Nunn receives first prize at Bude in September from organiser of the Clarke Memorial Rapidplay, John Constable.

DUNDEE – Despite being outrated by more than 400 points, Richard Jennings of Bon Accord Chess Club defeated IM Andrew Greet in the opening round of the Dundee Congress (18-20 October), which won him a bottle of Lindores Abbey's Aqua Vitae.
Open: 1-4 David Findlay, Ed Spencer (both Dundee), Stephen Mannion (Paisley), Murad Abdulla (Aberdeen) 4/5.
Major: 1 Stephen Smith (Stirling) 5, 2-5 Stephen Harvey (Oban), William Clinton (Livingston), Frankie Murray (East Kilbride), Laurenziu Archip (Dundee) 4.
Minor: 1-3 Hunter McKay (Inverness), Angus Sneddon (Newport-on-Tay), Tom Wardlaw (Perth) 4½.

FAREHAM – Rolandas Lukosius became Hampshire Champion on tie-break from defending champion Matt Chapman after the pair had tied for second in the Hampshire Congress (1-3 November)
Open: 1 Cliff Chandler (Maidstone) 5/6, 2-3 Matt Chapman (Fareham), Rolandas Lukosius (Hamble) 4.
Major: 1 Matthew Wilson (Plymouth) 5, 2-4 Thomas Evans (Cosham), David Holmes (Chandlers Ford), John Torrance (Bromley) 4½.
Minor: 1-2 Chris Webb (Dorchester), Charles Bird (Battersea) 5, 3 William Taplin (Keynsham) 4½.

GLASGOW – Andrew Greet triumphed at a strong Polytechnic Centenary Quickplay on September 26th as the Glasgow Club celebrated their 100th anniversary. On display was an original stained glass artwork designed and created by member Julien Papillon, which features 100 chess pieces – one for each year of the club's existence, with the gold king representing 1988, the year Glasgow Polytechnic became the first Scottish Club to win the British National Club Championship.
Leading scores: 1 Andrew Greet (Bearsden) 5/5, 2 Stephen Mannion (Paisley) 4½, 3-7 Alan Tate (Edinburgh), Graeme Nolan (Bellshill), Roddy McKay (Cathcart), Robert Mitchell (Glasgow), Rob Colston (Bearsden) 4.

GUERNSEY – Mark Hebden (Leicester) scooped the £1,200 first prize with a clean sweep at the Guernsey Open (20-26 October), finishing a point clear of Nigel Povah (Guildford) who made 6/7, with Valerio Bianco (Italy) and John Wager (Maidenhead) back on 5. Meanwhile local player Arita Strade won the Holiday tournament with 6½/7 by half a point from Peter Hoogakker (Holland), with Nigel Dennis (Maidenhead) and Bill Ingham (Teignmouth) a further point back.

HULL – A unique partnership between the 4NCL and the Hull and District Chess Association, led by Mike Truran and Stephen Greep, saw Hull stage a GM norm event (30 October - 3 November). The tournament was supported by Hull Culture and Leisure, the Friends of Chess, the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust and the ECF, and joined for

its latter stages by a successful 56th Hull Congress. The 10-player all-play-all always looked too competitive for anyone to make a GM norm, although Marcus Harvey's highly respectable 50% earnt him an IM norm.

Despite starting with only 1/3, top seed Vojtech Plat looked quite at home with the rapid pace of two games a day – and games without a time control, that being 90 minutes for the whole game plus 30 seconds a move. Plat had to survive suspect positions en route to a couple of wins, but also oozed class at times, on the board as well as the clock, as he came through to edge out Matthew Turner by a point. At the other end of the field, your editor was simply relieved not to finish on *nul points*, mixing playing with magazine duties.

The strength of the weekend tournament was obvious as early as the second round, where Mark Hebden was held to a draw by young Yichen Han, while Peter Sowray overcame fellow FM Richard Britton. The key battle took place on the Sunday morning as Danny Gormally overpowered Hebden's favourite Marshall, ahead of making a quick draw and pocketing the £500 first prize.

Open: 1 Danny Gormally (Alnwick) 4½/5, 2-4 Jonah Willow (Nottingham), John Richardson (Hendon), Samuel Milson (Sheffield) 4.

Major: 1-2 John Thackray (Hull), Peter Wood (Lewisham) 4½, 3-5 Mick Riding (Gosforth), Denis Georgiou (Appleby Frodingham), Richard Bowman (Keighley) 4.

Minor: 1 Neil Fisher (Peterborough) 4½, 2-6 Andrew Zigmond (Harrogate), Emily Maton (St Albans), Noel Boustred (Gosforth), Vivien Webster (Halifax), Milosz Kasprzyk (Hull) 4.

D.Gormally-M.Hebden
Hull 2019
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0–0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d3 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4

The old main line after 12 d3, but these days Black usually prefers 13...♗f5, and only if 14 ♕f3 ♕h4.

14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♖e4 ♘f6 16 ♖h4! ♕f5 17 ♘d2 ♘g4?!

Not 17...♕xd3? 18 ♖d4, but 17...g5! 18 ♖h6 ♘g4 19 ♘e4! ♘xh6 20 ♘xd6 is the critical line.

18 f3 ♘e5?!

Black is simply pushed backwards after this, although after the 18...♘e3 19 ♕e2 ♘d5 of Smeets-Hebden, Liverpool 2008, Gormally was no doubt ready with 20 ♘e4 when White is better.

19 d4 ♘g6 20 ♗c2 ♕d7 21 ♖h5!

The exclam is for bravery. The rook is quite safe on its advanced square.

21...f5 22 ♗b3+ ♔h8 23 f4 h6

Running down the number of squares available to the rook, but not only is White a pawn up, he can now seize the initiative.

24 ♘f3 ♗b7 25 ♘e5 ♕e8 26 g4?

This is too ambitious, however. 26 ♕f3 was indicated, and if 26...♘e7 27 ♖h3 ♖b8 28 ♕h5, retaining a clear plus, or 26...♖b8 27 g4! ♘e7? 28 ♕h3 with a decisive attack.

26...c5?

Far too ambitious. Instead, 26...♘e7 would have left everything to play for, and if 27 g5 c5 28 gxh6 g6 or 27 ♕f3 fxg4 28 ♕xg4 ♗c8 29 ♕h4 ♖f6.

27 gxf5 ♗xe5!?

Continuing down the faulty line, but 27...♘e7 28 ♕g4 ♗c8 29 ♗c2 would have left White in complete control.

28 fxe5 ♘xe5 29 dxe5 ♖xf5 30 ♖xf5 ♕g6+ 31 ♖g5 ♕e4

Spurning the rook when Black would still find himself a piece in arrears.

32 ♗f4! ♕xf4 33 ♖g3 ♕e4 34 ♕g4 1-0

LIVERPOOL – We were saddened to hear of the death of David Welsh (xxx.x.1945-ix.xi.2019), the highly-respected former Chief Arbiter of the 4NCL and the ECF. He played a vital role in many a British Championships, as well as at Hastings and the Isle of Man and Gibraltar Internationals, not to mention countless weekend and schools events.

Born in Chesterfield, Welch studied physics at Queens' College, Cambridge, where he was even the cox for the college eight. He went on to teach physics at Liverpool College until retiring in 2000 after which his arbiting duties even managed to multiply, while he was also a decent 140/150 player for Wallasey Chess Club until suffering a stroke in Gibraltar in the summer of 2017, which left him badly paralysed. In the words of his good friend and fellow arbiter Peter Purland, who also began teaching at Liverpool College on the same day in 1968, David Welch "will be remembered as a true gentleman, polite, caring, hard working and with an excellent brain."

LONDON – Adam Raoof's monthly Hampstead Under-2200 Congresses remain popular. The September edition (21-22) saw Thomas Villiers and Remy Rushbrooke (both Barnet) tie for first on 4½/5, with Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) winning the Under-1900 section with that same score to finish half a point ahead of Nigel Norman (Coulsdon), Kamila Kolpashnikova (Oxford) and Emily Maton (St Albans). In the Under-1700 Lukasz Zarzycki (Poland) prevailed with '+4' to edge out Andrew Swales (Burnley), Travis Shafer (Bloomberg) and Avyukt Dasgupta (Watford) by half a point.

Lukasz Zarzycki (Poland) once again triumphed in the Under-1700 section with 4½/5 on October 19th and 20th, Chris Flowers (Pimlico) and Frank Gillespie (Beckenham) finishing half a point adrift. There the Under-1900 went to Timur Kuzhelev (Coulsdon), also with '+4', John Cawston (Selby) and Dylan Mize (Pimloco) finishing back on 4/5, while Lorenzo Lucchi (London) and Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough) shared top honours with 4½ points in the Under-2200.

There was also a Muswell Hill Rapidplay on October 22nd which even attracted a grandmaster, but Bogdan Lalic (Hastings) had to settle for a share of first with Sacha Brozel (Hendon) on 5½/6. Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) and Colin Gentile (Muswell Hill) came joint first with '+4' in the Major, while the Minor saw a four-way tie for first on 4½/6 between Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood), Tony Bynnersley (West London), Daniel Aserkoff (Barnet) and Cian Ward (Richmond).

2019 Hull 4NCL GM Tournament (Category: 9, average rating = 2455 Elo)

	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Pts	TPR
1	Vojtech Plat	CZE	2570	*	0	1	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	6.5	*2608*
2	Matthew Turner	SCO	2517	1	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	0	1	5.5	*2527*
3	Andrew Greet	SCO	2414	0	½	*	½	0	½	1	½	1	1	5	*2499*
4	Laszlo Gonda	HUN	2532	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	4.5	*2448*
5	Marcus Harvey	ENG	2405	½	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	0	1	4.5	*2461*
6	Ravi Haria	ENF	2451	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	4.5	*2456*
7	David Eggleston	ENG	2392	0	0	0	½	1	½	*	1	1	½	4.5	*2462*
8	Peter Roberson	ENG	2437	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	1	½	4	*2420*
9	Alan Merry	ENG	2426	½	1	0	½	1	½	0	0	*	0	3.5	*2381*
10	Richard Palliser	ENG	2413	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	1	*	2.5	*2295*

MOUNT MURRAY – Alongside the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss, the Isle of Man International featured Major and Minor sections under the care of International Arbiter (and IM) Jack Rudd (12-18 October). **Major**: 1-4 David Ireland (Coventry), Nathanael Paul (Newport), Nicola-Alexandar Mircov (Romania), Mike Waddington (Dorchester) 5. **Minor**: 1 Andrew Brocklehurst (Civil Service) 5½, 2-3 Russell Goodfellow (Tunbridge Wells), Brian Towers (South Shields) 5.

NORTH SHIELDS – Icelandic IM Gudmundur Kjartansson shared first place with Durham undergraduate and fellow IM Andrew Horton in a strong edition of the Northumberland Congress in North Shields (27-29 September). **Open**: 1-2 Gudmundur Kjartansson (Iceland), Andrew Horton (3Cs) 4/5, 3-6 David Walker (South Shields), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), James Moreby (Gosforth), David Henderson (Tynemouth) 3½. **Major**: 1-3 Darren Laws (Tynemouth), Howard Turner (Lewisham), Alexander Brodie (Forest Hall) 4. **Minor**: 1 Morgan French (Forest Hall) 4½, 2-4 Paul Salisbury (Leeds), Kevin Cox (Gateshead), David Hunn (Dagenham) 4. **Foundation**: 1 James McKay (Gosforth) 7½/10, 2 Luke Fletcher (Gosforth) 7, 3-4 Matthew Jepson (Forest Hall), Gerald Gregory (Hertford) 6½.

SOLIHULL – As we went to press, Justin Tan triumphed at the final of the British Blitz Championship in Solihull on November 16th. A full report next time.

SOUTH NORMANTON – John Merriman played the perfect Swiss Gambit at the 23rd 4NCL Congress in South Normanton (4-6 October). The eighth seed drew his first game before winning four on the bounce, including outplaying Mark Hebden in the final round. Meanwhile top seed Brandon Clarke was defeated by Martin Burrows and could only finish on 3/5, although Clarke would quickly bounce back to form on the Isle of Man, as shown by John Saunders earlier in these pages. **Open**: 1 John Merriman (Orpington) 4½/5, 2 Martin Burrows (Wigston) 4, 3-10 Keith Arkell (Paignton), Mark Hebden (Leicester), Jonah Willow (Nottingham), Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield), Aditya Verma (Orpington), Max Turner (Berwick), Rajjat Makkar (Reading), Eric Gardiner (Hull) 3½. **Major**: 1-2 Tim Spanton (Battersea), Robert Taylor (Ashfield) 4, 3-10 Peter Davies (Pontypridd), Geoffrey Brown (Folkestone), John Garnett (Stockton), Richard Bryant (Oswestry), Rob Tokeley (Burnley), Robert Dean (Pudsey), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Sam Davies (Southport) 3½. **Minor**: 1-2 Paul Salisbury (Leeds), Tomasz Adamski (Derby) 4, 3-9 Tas Dhillon (Syston), Neal Fisher (Peterborough), Kate Walker (Shrewsbury), Matthew Bridgeman (Morecombe), Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Nigel Morris (Coventry), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Newport) 3½.

SWANSEA – Czech FM Daniel Kozusek triumphed at the West Wales Congress in Swansea (11-13 October). **Open**: 1 Daniel Kozusek (Pontypridd) 4½/5, 2-3 Grzegorz Toczek (Cardiff), Ian Thompson (Athenaeum) 4. **Major**: 1-2 David Pinch (Milford Haven), Philip Pe (Philippines) 4. **Minor**: 1 Alex Lawrence (Pontypridd) 4½, 2 Paul Bevan (Swansea) 4.

WOLFSCASTLE – On October 19th Wolfscastle village green saw a plaque unveiled to commemorate the life of William Davies Evans (27 January 1790 - 3 August 1872), who was born just outside the village. Captain Evans is remembered for the invention of tri-coloured safety lighting for ships at sea, although chessplayers are much more likely to know him for his gambit, 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♗c5 4 b4.

Thanks to the sterling research of Tim Harding, it was shown how Evans' frequent voyages from Ireland to Ostend (where he is buried), and from Tilbury to Cape Verde enabled him to play chess with a great number of the leading Victorian players. The Welsh Chess Union was represented by Howard Williams, Iolo Jones and Peter Bevan at the unveiling, and commented that they were "Justifiably proud of the achievements of William Davies Evans as he was the strongest player to ever have been born in Wales to date and his memory will never be forgotten."

OVERSEAS NEWS

GERMANY – After the Hamburg Grand Prix and the European Club Cup in Montenegro – won by Obiettivo Risarcimento Padova, for whom Michael Adams and Gawain Jones played key roles – the world top-ten was: 1 Carlsen 2870, 2 Caruana 2822, 3 Ding Liren 2801, 4 Vachier-Lagrave 2779, 5 Aronian 2775, 6 Mamedyarov 2772, 7 Grischuk 2771, 8 Giri 2769, 9 Nepomniachtchi 2767, 10 Radjabov 2764.

The aforementioned third leg of the FIDE Grand Prix, on which we'll have plenty more next time, saw Alexander Grischuk overcome Jan-Krzysztof Duda after a tie-break in the final. Grischuk now has 20 GP points, which should give him one of the two Candidates places. He does not play in the final leg in Jerusalem, where the final spot should go to one of Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (currently on 13 points), Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (10) and Ian Nepomniachtchi (9).

NORWAY – It was surprising that FIDE decided to award the Fischer Random knockout tournament world championship status, but they did. Notably too, for the closing stages in Høvikodden (27 October - 2 November), the slowest time control used was 40 moves in 45 minutes followed by 15 minutes to finish the game, with no increment at all. Each match featured four such games, worth three points to the winner, as well as four 'fast rapid' games (15 minutes with a two-second increment), worth two points, and four blitz encounters (3+2), worth a point each, with the players debating each randomly-selected starting position with both colours.

It was no surprise that Magnus Carlsen overcame Fabiano Caruana 12½-7½ in the semi-finals, but Wesley So's 13-5 win over Ian Nepomniachtchi did make one sit up and take notice. The final would show that it was no fluke as So raced into a 4½-1½ lead against Carlsen and didn't take his foot off the pedal, but utterly crushed the home favourite, eventually winning by as much as 13½-2½. Carlsen has struggled on home soil before, but such a scoreline was still extremely hard to see coming. Less of a surprise was Ian Nepomniachtchi's 12½-5½ demolition of Caruana in the third-place play-off.

ROMANIA – After long-time leader Anton Korobov collapsed on the final day, it was left to Levon Aronian to edge out Sergey Karjakin in a play-off to triumph at the Superbet Bucharest Blitz and Rapid (6-10 November). We'll bring you much more on that next month, but heading into the seventh leg of the Grand Chess Tour in Kolkata, the race to qualify for the finals in London was looking even more exciting than in the FIDE Grand Prix. Magnus Carlsen (54.5 GCT points) has already booked his ticket and Ding Liren (37.8) will surely also qualify, leaving the remaining birth between Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (36.8), Levon Aronian (36.5) and Vishy Anand (32), of whom, potentially crucially, the Frenchman does not play in India.

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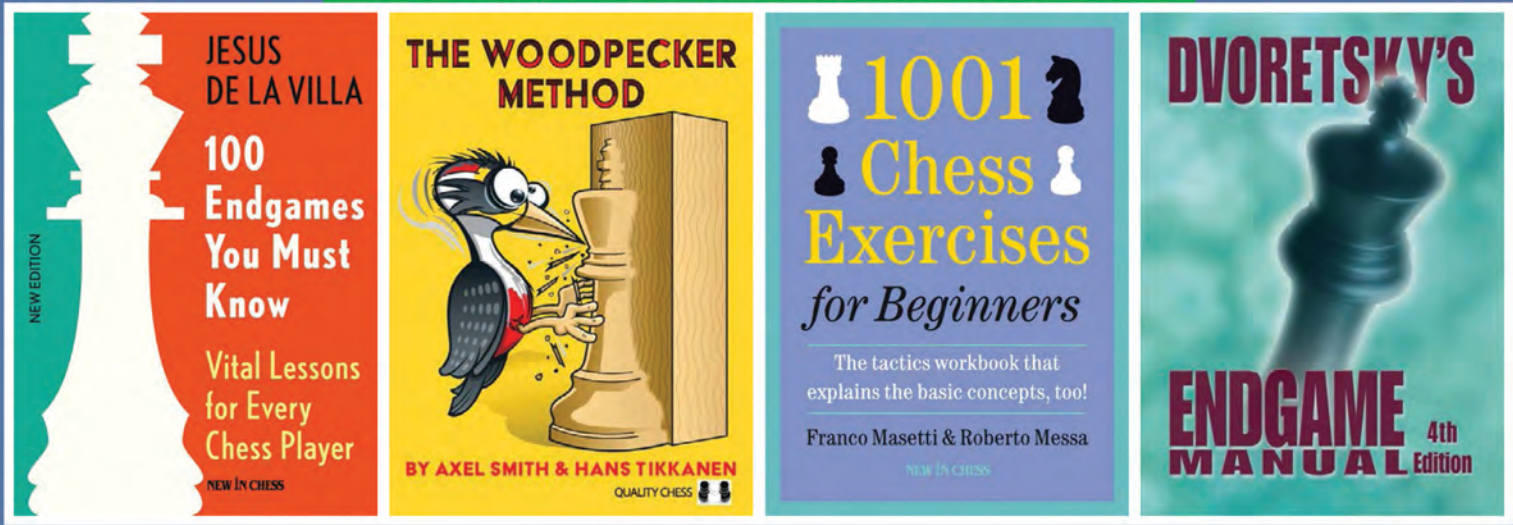


Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pages 26-28)

1) Smith-Ward
1 ♖xf7+! 1-0 If 1...♖xf7 2 ♕g6+ and 3 ♕g8#.

2) Turner-Willow
1 ♘xf7! 1-0 1...♔xf7 2 ♕h5+ collects the rook on e8 and mates.

3) Dreev-Inarkiev
1...♖xc3+! 0-1 2 ♕xc3 ♕xd5+ picks up the rook on b7.

4) Mashayekh-Wagner Michel
Black was able to escape after 1 ♕h5? ♔f8 2 ♖d1 d4, but **1 e7!** would have won, and if 1...♕xg6 2 exd8♕+.

5) Cowan-Ismail
1 ♘xd5! ♕xd5 (1...♖a7 2 0-0-0 threatens 3 ♖hf1 and looks horrendous for Black after 2...♕e5 3 ♕xe5 fxe5 4 ♗h5+ ♔d8 5 ♘b6) **2 ♗f3 ♕d4 3 ♕xd4 cxd4 4 ♗xa8** bagged an exchange.

6) Sevian-Tari
1 ♗xg7! (this could be delayed, but needs to be played at some point; the connected passed pawns now sweep all before them) **1...♖xg7 2 h6 ♖g8 3 h7 ♖h8 4 ♔h6 ♗g8 5 ♔g7 1-0**

7) Nihal-Nebolsina
1 ♖xg7! ♖xg7 (if 1...♔xg7 2 ♕g5+ ♔f8 3 ♖h8#) **2 ♖h8+ ♔f7 3 ♕h5+ ♔e7 4 ♕xe5+ 1-0** 4...♔f7 5 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 6 ♕f5+ wins the house.

8) Bartel-Matuszewski
Black has just fallen for an opening trap by capturing on d4: **1 ♗xe4! ♗xe4** (or 1...dxc3 2 ♗xb7) **2 ♕xd4 1-0** Black can't defend the mate and his bishop.

9) Charochkina-Shafigullina
1 ♖xh7+! (by no means the only way to win, but more forcing than 1 d6) **1...♗xh7** (1...♔g8 2 ♖eg7+ ♕xg7 3 ♖xg7+ is clearly hopeless) **2 ♖xe8 1-0** The key point, deflecting, and if 2...♕xe8 3 ♕xf6+ ♔g8 4 ♕g7#.

10) Melkumyan-Naroditsky
After 1...a3? 2 ♔xf3 a2 3 ♘exd6 a1♕ 4 ♔f4 Black was unable to win, the two knights and two pawns giving White an easy-to-hold fortress against Black's lone queen, but **1...♖d3!** would have won, keeping the rook and leaving White unable to stop the a-pawn from queening.

11) Wachinger-Gharibyan
1...♗xg4! (1...♘xg4? 2 ♖d2 wins a piece, while maintaining White's remaining pawn) **2 ♖xd7 ♗xf5 3 ♖d8+ ♔g7 4 ♔xe3** liquidated down to just rook against bishop, which should be an easy draw: **4...♗h7 5 ♔f4 ♗g8 6 ♔g5 ♗h7 7 ♖d7+ ♔h8 8 ♔h6 ♗g8 9 ♖g7 ♗c4 10 ♖h7+ ♔g8 11 ♖c7 ♗a2 12 ♖b7 ♔h8 13 ♖b8+** (allowing Black to demonstrate his key stalemate defence) **13...♗g8 14 ♔g6 ½-½**

12) Akobian-Swiercz
White simply has to queen as quickly as possible: **1 f4! ♔a3 2 f5 ♔xa2 3 f6 a3 4 f7 ♔b2 5 f8♕ a2 6 ♕b4+ ♔c2 7 ♕a3 ♔b1 8 ♕b3+ ♔a1** (hoping for stalemate, but while White will allow Black to queen, he will also mate him) **9 ♕c3+ ♔b1 10 ♔d3! 1-0**

13) Miesbauer-Liu Guanchu
1 ♘e4! ♕d8 (1...dxe4 2 ♗g5 f6 3 exf6 ♘xf6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 ♕xc7 is equally crushing) **2 ♗g5 ♕c8 3 ♘d6+! ♗xd6 4 exd6 ♘a6 5 ♗e7 ♖h7 6 ♖ae1 1-0** Black is positionally lost, threatened with 7 ♖xe6, and 6...♘f8 fails to 7 ♘g5 ♖g7 8 ♕e5.

14) McShane-Grandelius
1...♖xa3! 2 gxf7+ ♔xf7 3 ♗g6+ (3 bxa3 ♖c2 is also decisive) **3...♔f8 0-1** 4 bxa3 ♖c2 wins the white queen for starters, in view of 5 ♕d3? ♖b2+ 6 ♔a1 ♖a2+ 7 ♔b1 ♖a1#.

15) Monteiro-Hopwood
1...♗e5 was seen in the game when 2 ♗f5 ♖ce8 3 c3 would only have been slightly better for Black. However, there was no need to fear the threat of ♕f5, **1...♘a4! 2 ♕f5** (2 c3? is cleaned up by 2...♗xc3! 3 bxc3 ♘xc3+ 4 ♔a1 ♘xe4 and 2 ♖d4 ♗xd4 3 ♕xd4 ♕b6 is just an extra exchange) **2...♘a3+! 3 ♔a1** (or 3 bxa3 ♘c3+ 4 ♔a1 ♘xe4+) **3...♘xc2+ 4 ♗xc2** (4 ♔b1 ♘a3+! 5 ♔a1 ♕xc1+! 6 ♖xc1 ♗xb2# is neat) **4...♕xc2 5 ♕xc2 ♖xc2** leaving White a pawn down and under ongoing pressure.

16) Mounce-Wild
1 ♘g6! (1 ♖ae1 also works, and if 1...♔d8 2 ♘f5!, but is much more complicated) **1...♘e2+** (1...fxg6 2 ♕c7 ♕f7 3 ♗xg6! is another important point) **2 ♗xe2 fxg6 3 f7+ ♔d8 4 ♕f6+ ♔c7 5 ♕xh8! 1-0**

17) Turner-Kett
White has just met ...♖4e3!? with b5-b6?? (the cold-blooded fxe3 would have won), and went on to win after 1...♕f3 2 ♘xe5 ♖8xe5 3 ♕b1! ♖f5!? (3...♖h5 4 h4 ♖xh4! 5 gxh4 ♕g4+ was the easiest way to force a draw) 4 ♖1d2 ♖g5? (4...♖b5! would have led to simplification and a draw) 5 ♕f1, but Black would actually have won this dramatic encounter from the 1st Welsh Masters if he had found **1...♗xg3! 2 fxg3 ♕f3!**, which just reminds us that backwards queen moves are ever easy to miss. Here White is simply completely lost: for example, 3 ♘xd4 ♕xg3+ 4 ♔h1 ♖e1+ 5 ♖xe1 ♖xe1# or 3 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 4 ♕c2 ♖e2 5 ♕xe2 ♕xe2 6 ♖b1 ♕c2.

18) Berg-Kryakvin
1...♘a4! 2 ♖xc7? (2 bxa4? ♖xc1 would be hopeless, but after 2 ♘xe4 ♖xc1 3 ♖xd5 Black would still have had a bit of work to do) **2...♘ac3+ 3 ♔d3 ♖xc7 4 ♖a1** (the only safe square for the rook, but now White's king will be hunted to its doom) **4...♘xf2+ 5 ♔d4 ♔f6 6 ♘c4** (missing the threat, but 6 e4 dxe4 7 ♘c4 ♘fd1 also wins) **6...♘b5+ 0-1** If 7 ♔xd5 ♖c5#.

19) McShane-Delgado Ramirez
1 ♕xf4! (avoiding 1 ♖xd3? ♖a2+ 2 ♔g1 ♖a1+ 3 ♔g2 ♖a2+ when Black escapes with a draw, in view of 4 ♔h3?? ♖h2#) **1...exf4 2 ♖xd3!** (2 ♘xh6+ ♔g7 3 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 4 c6! ♖c3 5 g5 also works, but not 2 ♖f3?? ♗xe4) **2...♖xd3 3 c6! ♔f8** (the pawn armada sweeps Black away too in the event of 3...gxf5 4 c7 ♖c3 5 d6) **4 d6 ♔e8 5 ♘g7+ ♔f7 6 c7 1-0**

20) Ledger-Fercec
1...♘d3! 2 ♗xd3? (White had to ditch the exchange and keep his dark-squared bishop) **2...♗xd4+ 3 ♔h1?** (3 ♖f2 ♕xg5 wins the exchange) **3...♘g3+!** (the star follow-up; White will be mated on the h-file) **4 hxg3 ♕xg5 0-1**

21) Ganguly-Saduakassova
1 ♖d6! ♕e7 2 ♗xh6! ♘d4 (2...gxh6 3 ♖xh6 threatens 4 ♕h5 and wins, in view of 3...♕f8 4 ♖h5! f6 5 ♕g4+ ♕g7 6 ♕e6+ ♕f7 7 ♖h8+!) **3 ♕g4 f6 4 ♗h3 ♔h8** (Black is getting crushed and is now finished off in brutal fashion) **5 ♕g6! gxh6 6 ♖1xd4! cxd4 7 ♕xh6+ ♕h7 8 ♕xf6+ ♕g7 9 ♕f5 d3** (or 9...♖f8 10 ♕h5+ ♕h7 11 ♕xe5+ ♕g7 12 ♖h6+ ♔g8 13 ♗e6+ and wins) **10 ♕h5+ ♔g8 11 ♖g6 1-0**

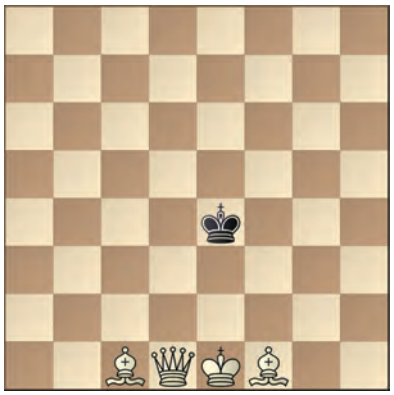
22) Zierk-Mikhalevski
1...♖a2+! (gaining a key tempo; 1...♖a1 2 ♖a6 a3 3 c6 ♔d6 4 ♖a4 is only a draw) **2 ♔f3** (2 ♔f1 ♖a1+ 3 ♔f2 a3 4 ♖a6 d3 is clearly hopeless, as is 2 ♔g3 d3 3 ♔f3, in view of 3...a3 4 ♖d6 d2 5 ♖d8 ♖b2 6 c6 a2 7 c7 a1♕ 8 c8♕ ♕f1+, as indicated by Mikhalevski) **2...a3 3 ♖a6** (3 ♖h6!? ♖a1 4 c6 is a try for counterplay, but after 4...♖f1+ 5 ♔g3 a2 6 c7 a1♕ 7 c8♕ Black gets to check first and so wins, as after 7...♕e1+ 8 ♔g4 ♕e4+ 9 ♔h5 ♖f5+) **3...♖a1 4 ♔f2** (once again, White had 4 c6 ♔d6 5 ♖a4, but here it's lost due to the initial tempo gained by Black: 5...a2 6 ♖xd4+ ♔xc6 7 ♔g4 ♖b1 8 ♖a4 a1♕ 9 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 10 h4 ♔d6 and the pawns are too slow) **4...d3**

5 c6 ♔d6 6 ♖a4 a2 7 ♖a3 ♔xc6! 0-1 Remaining precise to the end, Mikhalevski having spotted that White was playing for 7...d2? 8 ♖d3+! ♔e5 9 ♖xd2 ♖f1+ 10 ♔xf1 a1♕+ 11 ♔f2.

23) Shuvalova-Afonasieva
White has a most aesthetic mating sequence: **1 ♖xg7! ♗xg7 2 ♕xh7+! ♔xh7 3 f6+ ♔h6 4 ♗e3+ ♔h5 5 ♗f3+ ♔h4 6 ♗f2+ 1-0** Black should really have played out 6...♔h3 7 ♗g4#.

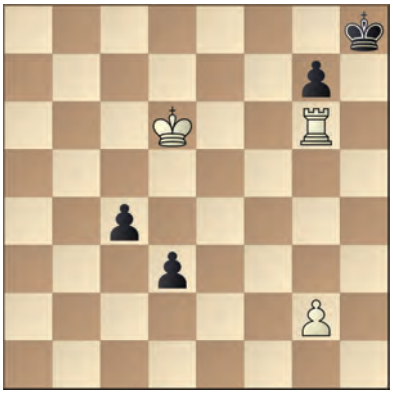
24) Duda-Xiong
1 e5!! (the classic breakthrough on a square Black thought he controlled; 1 ♕a7 ♕h6 2 ♕xa6 g4 is much less clear) **1...dxe5?** (of course, 1...fxe5? 2 ♕xg5+ forces mate, but with 1...♕h5 2 exd6 ♕f7 Black would have been able to stay on the board, if not for too long; in his excellent ChessPublishing column, David Cummings supplies the logical sample line 3 ♔g2 a5 4 ♕d3 a4 5 ♕f5 a3 6 d7! ♕xd7 7 ♕xf6 ♕f7 8 ♕xg5+ ♕g6 9 ♕xg6+ hxg6 10 d6 and wins) **2 ♕a7 ♕h6 3 d6 ♖c1 4 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 5 ♔g2 g4 6 h4!** (this really needed to be seen in advance!) **6...gxh3+ 7 ♔h2 ♕g6 8 ♕a8+! 1-0** Taking control of the key diagonal before queening and thereby avoiding 8 d7?? ♖h1+! 9 ♔xh1 ♕e4+ 10 ♔h2 ♕g2#.

Benko's Bafflers
(p. 31 of the October *CHESS*)



Did you do better than Bobby Fischer? The only way to mate in three is **1 ♗c4! ♔e5** (or 1...♔f5 2 ♕f3+ and if 2...♔e5 3 ♕f4# or 2 ..♔g6 3 ♕f7#) **2 ♕d5+ ♔f6 3 ♕g5#**.

Max Euwe struggled with this study which was composed for him in the shape of the letter 'E'. White mates in three with **1 ♘c4!** (threatening 2 ♘d4#) **1...♘c6** (or 1...c5 2 ♕xc5+! ♘xc5 3 ♘d4#) **2 ♕xa4+! ♔xa4 3 ♗xc6#**.



White wins with **1 ♔e7! d2** (1...c3 2 ♔f7 c2 3 ♖c6 ♔h7 4 g4! is similar) **2 ♖d6 c3 3 ♔f7 ♔h7** (3...c2 fails to 4 ♖d3) **4 g4!**, which leads to mate: **4...c2** (if 4...g6 5 g5 c2 6 ♖xg6 c1♕ 7 ♖h6# or 4...g5 5 ♖d3 and 6 ♖h3#) **5 g5 d1♕ 6 ♖h6+! gxh6 7 g6+ ♔h8 8 g7+ ♔h7 9 g8♕#**.

This Month's New Releases

A Startling Chess Opening Repertoire – New Edition
Chris Baker and Graham Burgess, 192 pages
Gambit Publications
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The first edition of this interesting book was published back in 1998. Theory has obviously moved on a great deal since then, especially since everyone started using chess engines. To catch up with the new developments, Graham Burgess, who has updated Chris Baker's earlier repertoire, explains: "This new edition brings the repertoire completely up to date. The basic choice of main lines is unchanged, but each move has been re-examined and new ideas from practice and analysis incorporated at every turn."

The back-cover blurb puts it very directly: "Tired of being surprised in the opening? Horrified by studying many hours each week to keep on top of the latest developments in main-line openings? Then this is the book for you!"

The aim is to offer a full 1 e4 repertoire that will be accessible to club players and will be essentially sound – but dangerous for the opponent. The Max Lange Attack (1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♘f6 4 d4) forms the backbone of the repertoire. This is a very old line, of course, but might carry more of a sting now that everyone is playing the regular Italian Game.

What is classed as startling? The Cochrane Gambit (1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘xf7) may well be unpleasant for a solid Petroff fan, but I am not so sure anyone would ever claim to have been startled by 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5, the main line in the Caro-Kann, or 2 ♘c3 against Alekhine's Defence. Indeed, White will have to leave the main repertoire after 1 e4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 e5 as the Max Lange Attack is no longer a possibility. Here the recommendation is to head for a Four Knights with 4 h3.

Burgess, in the new introduction, suggests some changes "If there are any recommendations you don't like, or you just want some variety," and these include the Morra Gambit and the Fantasy Caro-Kann.

The lines given in the book have been

tested with chess engines and this process has unearthed some interesting twists, such as this one, from a line in the French Defence (which starts with 1 e4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♘c3).

Black now plays **12...g5** which is met by the truly startling sequence **13 ♗xg5!? ♖g8 14 f4 h6 15 ♗xe7 ♖xg4 16 ♗xc5**. The white queen has gone but the position "offers White a bind and a lot of compensation."

Club players should be able to get a 1 e4 repertoire up and running relatively quickly, but anyone hoping their opponents to be in state of startled shock when facing the advocated lines will have to lower their expectations somewhat.

Sean Marsh

Davorin Kuljasevic
Ignore the Face Value of Your Pieces and Discover the Importance of Time, Space and Psychology in Chess
BEYOND MATERIAL

Beyond Material
Davorin Kuljasevic, 336 pages
New in Chess
RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

This interesting new book encourages the reader to "Ignore the face value of your pieces and discover the importance of time, space and psychology in chess." Or, in short, "Improve your ability to take calculated risks!".

Kuljasevic, a grandmaster from Croatia with a peak rating of 2591 (achieved in 2013) is also an experienced coach and writer who used to be the host of a Croatian chess television programme. He is firmly of the view that when it comes to sacrificial play "Modern chess players need to be able to suppress their need for immediate gratification. In order to gain the upper hand you often have to live with uncertain compensation." This is very interesting indeed, because I am sure most of us have the need to have something definite in mind when offering even small amounts of material, whether it is a fast return of anything sacrificed or a real chance of checkmating the opponent's king.

There are five main parts to the book and the titles give a useful indication of what to expect: Attachment to material; Time beats material; Space beats material; Psychology of non-materialism; Is it good to be greedy in chess? These are followed by the solutions to the 50 exercises which can be found throughout the book.

Some well-known classics are present and correct, such as Petrosian's 30 ♕h8+! finale against Spassky in game 10 of their 1966 title match and Kasparov cutting Pribyl's Grünfeld position in two with the sacrificial 16 d5! (Skara 1980), but there is an abundance of fresh examples such as this startling example.

D.Khismatullin-P.Eljanov
Jerusalem 2015

White looks to be in a bad way, but the tables are turned in remarkable fashion.

44 ♔g1!!

"Usually, when people take my rook with check, I lose the game. However, Khismatullin's idea is much deeper: by giving up the rook, he gains enough time to tuck away his king on the safe h2-square and claim that he can organize a mating attack with his queen and pawns only."

44...♕xd1+?

"Black had an only defense, which is brilliant in its own right: 44...Rd5!! The point is twofold: firstly to keep the queen on c2, so that both the rook on d1 and the c-pawn would remain under control and, secondly, to bring the rook into the defense via the fifth rank."

45 ♔h2 ♖xc6 46 ♕e7+ Kh6 47 ♕f8+ ♔g5 48 ♕xf7!

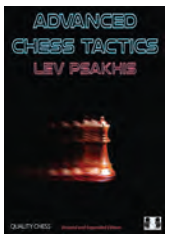
"Such quiet moves that close the mating net are possible only when your own king is safe."

48...♖f6 49 f4+ ♔h6 50 ♕xf6 (1-0, 57).

I like the author's style. He does not dumb anything down – which is a very common mistake when writing for club players – and he is clearly an erudite and knowledgeable chess player. There is enough material here to keep even the keenest of chess students busy for some time and it definitely has the potential to change the way a player thinks.

Beyond Material is a very good book. It provides a plethora of excellent material, which is both entertaining and instructive, while remaining fully accessible to club players.

Sean Marsh



Advanced Chess Tactics
Lev Psakhis, 416 pages, paperback
RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

This is a new edition of a modern classic from Quality Chess. There's little doubt that the weaker club player will struggle with the material, but stronger players keen on working hard to improve their game will find a great range of material and challenging exercises to solve. As well as various tweaks, Psakhis has added a chapter on something he knows very well: attacking ideas in the French Defence.

Please note that if you'd prefer to receive a hardback version of *Advanced Chess Tactics*, you should simply add £4.00 to your order with Chess & Bridge.

Alma and the Dark Dominion
Judit Berg, 272 pages, hardback
RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

This represents a new direction for Quality Chess, being a novel written by an award-winning Hungarian children's author. Judit Berg received help from a famous fellow Judit with the chess content of this adventure story. If your children like the premise of "On a fateful summer afternoon Alma, Drifter, Felix and Bella are mysteriously transported to an alien world. Can they find their way back home? To succeed, they will need to make clever decisions – and perhaps even some sacrifices" then this might make for a nice Christmas present.

ChessBase Magazine 192
ChessBase PC-DVD
RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

The latest *CBM* focusses on the Sinquefield Cup and Rex Sinquefield's immense contribution to modern chess, while presenting analysis from the likes of Vishy Anand and Nikita Vitiugov. Of special interest to the keen theoretician will be Igor Stohl on the Chinese Dragon (9 ♗c4 ♗d7 10 0-0-0 ♖b8!?), while those interested in the trendy Giuoco Piano should enjoy seeing Mihail Marin demonstrate how White can aim to attack on the kingside in the resulting middlegames.

Daily Chess Training: Chess Tactics Vol. 2
Carsten Hansen, 330 pages, paperback
RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

This self-published work from the erudite and experienced Danish FM presents 404 positions to solve, all selected with the aim of improving the reader's over-the-board play. Yes, one knows that there is a tactic to solve in each one, but not what type. It must also be said that the range of difficulty is quite a

wide one, just as you might encounter a simple pin and also a complex mating attack to calculate in the same game, while the size of the book should give some indication as to the thoroughness of the solutions.

Kaufman's New Repertoire for Black & White
Larry Kaufman, 464 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Larry Kaufman is back for a third time with a repertoire work for both colours and one which is likely to prove highly popular based on the success of his earlier works. This time he draws heavily on Monte Carlo analysis from his own *Komodo* engine and other modern ones, while aiming to present a repertoire which is sound, trouble-causing and durable. As Black, Kaufman still advocates defending the Ruy Lopez and the Grünfeld, although he now prefers the Marshall to the Breyer in the former. The big change, however, is the shift from 1 d4 to 1 e4, with the new repertoire being both topical and fairly positional, the Italian Game and ♗b5 Sicilians featuring predominantly.

Navigating the Ruy Lopez Vol. 1
Fabiano Caruana, PC-DVD;
running time: 5 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

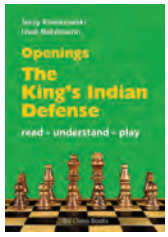
ChessBase have scored something of a coup by luring the world no.2 to their Hamburg studio. In conversation with IM Oliver Reeh, Caruana maps out a repertoire for White with his favourite 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5, drawing heavily on his own games and analysis. This first volume focusses on the main lines, showing the key motifs White needs to know to face the likes of the Chigorin and Breyer, while also revealing how to play the Anti-Marshall with 8 a4.

Also available in the same series are *Navigating the Ruy Lopez Vol. 2*, where Caruana and Reeh examine the Archangel, Open and Berlin variations (running time: 5 hours, 52 minutes), and *Navigating the Ruy Lopez Vol. 3* in which all Black's early deviations such as the Schliemann are discussed (running time: 5 hours, 26 minutes). Both volumes 2 and 3 also retail at £26.95 (Subscribers – £24.25), or you might prefer to purchase all three DVDs together for the special price of £75.00 or just £67.50 for Subscribers.

Opening Repertoire: The Modern Defence
Cyrus Lakdawala, 416 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

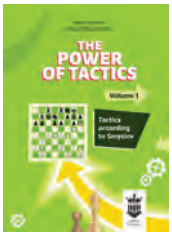
The Californian IM has already penned a *Move by Move* work for Everyman on the Modern, but this new repertoire work features a different set of lines. It is largely a fairly traditional interpretation of the opening, 1 e4 g6 2 d4 d6 3 ♘c3 being met by 3...c6 and if 4 f4 d5 or 4 ♗e3 ♗g7, rather than the more fashionable 3...♗g7 followed by 4...a6. As such, the repertoire may suit old fans of David Norwood's Modern approach, while another cornerstone of the Lakdawala approach is the 'Maybe Benoni', 1 d4 g6 2 c4 ♗g7 3 e4 c5 4 d5 d6 5 ♘c3 e6.

Also recently released from Everyman Chess is *The Modern Interpretation of Two Classical Systems*, which incorporates both Simon Williams' *The New Sicilian Dragon* and *The New Old Indian* by Alexander Cherniaev and Eduard Prokuronov, while running to some 384 pages and retailing at £18.99 (Subscribers – £17.09).



Openings: The King's Indian Defense
Jerzy Konikowski & Uwe Bekemann,
228 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Joachim Beyer Verlag continue to reveal the main ideas behind some of the most important openings for the club player. There is, of course, much, much more to the King's Indian than just the famous race between White's queenside play and Black's ideally mating attack in the Classical main lines. Experienced authors Konikowski and Bekemann are quite aware of that and supply plenty of explanation of the key ideas as they take the reader through the various lines and position types associated with this famous opening.



Power of Tactics Volume 1
Tadek Sakelsek & Adrian Mikhalchishin,
272 pages, paperback
RRP £23.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £21.55**

The sub-title 'Tactics according to Smyslov' reveals that Smyslov's games feature prominently in this new work from Chess Evolution, which focusses on a "Simpler model of tactics described, one according to the great former World Champion Vassily Smyslov." These are essential the basics of checks, pins, double attacks and unprotected pieces, all of which receive plenty of exercises, with the authors aiming to improve the tactical ability of all readers up to about 1800 strength.

Soviet Outcast
Grigory Levenfish, 304 pages, hardback
£26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

Did you know that Levenfish was the only Soviet Grandmaster to be denied a state stipend in later life? Thanks to this new translation from Quality Chess, English-speaking readers can now enjoy Levenfish's take on the Russian chess world, pre- and post-revolution. *Soviet Outcast* also contains Levenfish's notes to 79 of his best games, which include some lesser-known gems, while Jacob Aagaard has contributed a highly thoughtful Afterword.

The London System with 2.♗f4 Reloaded
Simon Williams, PC-DVD;
running time: 7 hours, 39 minutes
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

This is an entirely new DVD which updates the Ginger GM's earlier repertoire for ChessBase – and much more. DVD repertoires can sometimes be accused of being on the short side and missing out important sidelines, but not here. Williams examines some of Black's newest ideas, such as 1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘bd2 cxd4 (the main line with 6...♗d6 also receives extensive coverage) 7 exd4 ♘h5, showing how White should counter them, with the coverage of 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 ♘c3!? also significantly updated.

Throughout *The London System with 2.♗f4 Reloaded* there is a good balance of general explanation and theory, but those who really want to improve their mastery of the London should consider purchasing too Williams' companion DVD, *Tactic Toolbox London System* (RRP £26.95; Subscribers – £24.25). This runs to four hours and sees Williams emphasising the key ideas, while presenting a great range of interactive tests for the viewer to solve.

Saunders on Chess

Follow me on Twitter: @johnchess or email: johns@chess.co.uk

British Prime Minister Harold Wilson is usually credited as having said "A week is a long time in politics." It strikes me that a month is a long time in chess as, since, penning my November article, we've had the finish of the FIDE World Cup, the inaugural FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss in the Isle of Man (which I've reported on elsewhere in this issue), and the European Team Championship in Batumi. If we include chess variants, there has also been the FIDE World Fischer Random Chess Championship in Norway.

If all that high-level chess hasn't provided enough to think about, I have just attended the launch of Jonathan Rowson's new book, *The Moves That Matter*. I've only had it in my hands for a few hours and it's already sent my mind racing in all sorts of directions. My article last month was on thinking in chess, but that was just paddling in the shallow end compared to this Olympian plunge into deeper waters, which we are told was 13 years in the writing, and represents a distillation of the Scottish GM's thoughts about chess, how it relates to culture, how it's perceived by non-players, and much more. It's too early for me to say any more about it, other than to convey how much I am looking forward to reading the rest of it.

I felt incredibly privileged to witness the action in the Isle of Man, observing an unfeasibly large number of super-GMs fighting for the big money prize and the coveted seat in the 2020 Candidates tournament. It was possible to enjoy the tournament at home, via the good offices of Chess.com and their splendid commentators Daniel King and Anna Rudolf, but being physically close to the players, and chatting to them between rounds, somehow heightened awareness of the energy-sapping nature of big-time chess competition.

My primary emotion was admiration for the players' stamina. Even more so, for the resilience of those players who took part in three or more of the events cited in the opening paragraph. Anyone who has ever played in a chess competition knows how wearing the experience often is, but it is hard to overestimate just how much more pressure is on, and energy expended by, top professionals who compete in these high-profile events. Hence their occasional double-question-mark lapses are all too explicable.

The Fischer Random championship in Norway had me thinking. FIDE has now given it their endorsement, as has Magnus Carlsen, who told an interviewer how he and all the top players love it. Mind you, that was before Wesley So had comprehensively thrashed him in the final. But good may come of that since it is more likely to whet Carlsen's appetite for revenge. All it needs is for a sponsor to put up the cash for the Carlsen-So revenge match and I'm sure we will all be riveted to our screens.

'Well, yes; it's all very easy,' implies Wesley So who crushed Magnus Carlsen at Fischer Random.

One oddity was that this was billed as a world championship, but the title did not include the adjective 'rapid' or 'rapidplay'. Is there no interest in using a slower time control for Fischer Random, or having separate world titles for slow, rapid and blitz as in 'Chess001' (as I am minded to nickname traditional fixed-start-position chess)? These are still early days, but I wonder if this is part of a gradual move to speed up the game in all its forms.

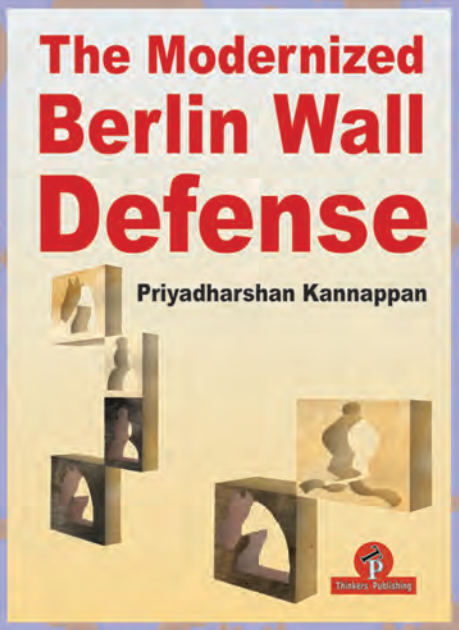
More generally, I was intrigued by Carlsen's seal of approval. It's perhaps another example of how a pre-eminent world champion (even a dead one, like Fischer) can exert influence on the format of the game. The last major change to the way the game was played occurred in the 1990s when adjournments gave way to single-session chess with a quicker time limit. Garry Kasparov was world champion at the time and I don't think this was a coincidence.

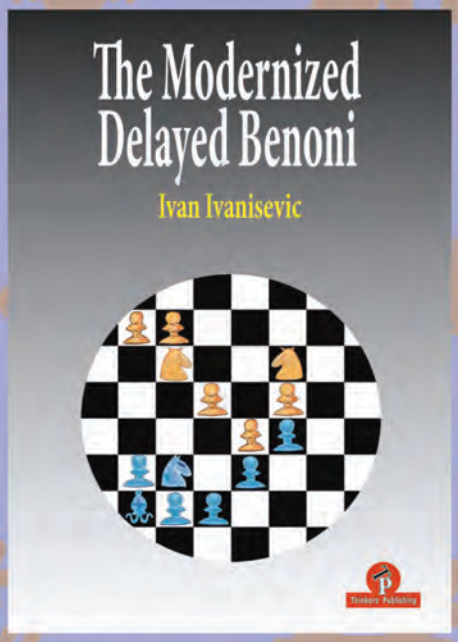
Prior to Kasparov perhaps the greatest influence on the format of the game was Mikhail Botvinnik. It was the Soviet chess patriarch's misfortune that what would have been his prime chess years coincided with the Second World War, but he made the best of things into his 40s and beyond when chess sessions were limited to five hours and you could benefit from your minions' analysis in subsequent sessions after a comfort break. If you didn't get the better of your opponent in the first session, you could refresh yourself, regroup and exploit your superior teamwork in the second. That wasn't just the secret of Botvinnik's individual games, but also that of two world championship cycles, as he went on to be the 'second session' destroyer of Smyslov and Tal in return matches in 1958 and 1961.

Moving forward to the 1990s, the Botvinnik pattern didn't suit Kasparov. He sought to indulge his (and his helpers') marked edge in the opening phase of the game and, being a younger and fitter man, was often able to outlast his opponents' stamina in a longer single session. This led to the chess we have today, spuriously labelled 'classical' (at best neo-classical), with its premium on opening knowledge and physical stamina, at the expense of the endgame, which only Carlsen and a handful of others play at a level comparable with stars of the adjournment era, and the fading away of older players who can't keep pace with the game's physical demands.

I thought of this last point again when I saw the line-up for the 2020 Wijk aan Zee tournament. In descending age order: Vishy Anand, who will be 50 when the tournament starts; then a huge gap to the second and third oldest players in the 14-player event, Ian Nepomniachtchi and Magnus Carlsen, who will both be 29. The rest of the line-up is composed of younger players in their 20s or teens. It looks like a fascinating line-up, and will be great to follow, but it is amazing to think that not a single player aged in their 30s or 40s will be taking part.

I suspect Carlsen has broadly similar format preferences to Kasparov in the 1990s, minus the burning passion for sharp opening theory, hence the Fischer Random variant may look like an attractive prospect. The same goes for his younger rivals, of course: Wesley So's performance in the event was very impressive and the variant might suit him rather better than it does Carlsen. It will be fascinating to see how this story develops.





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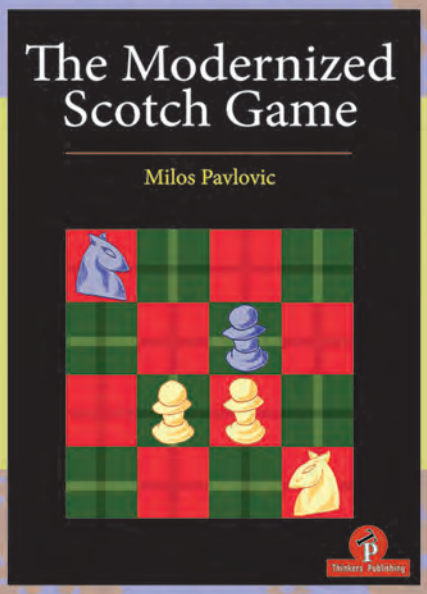

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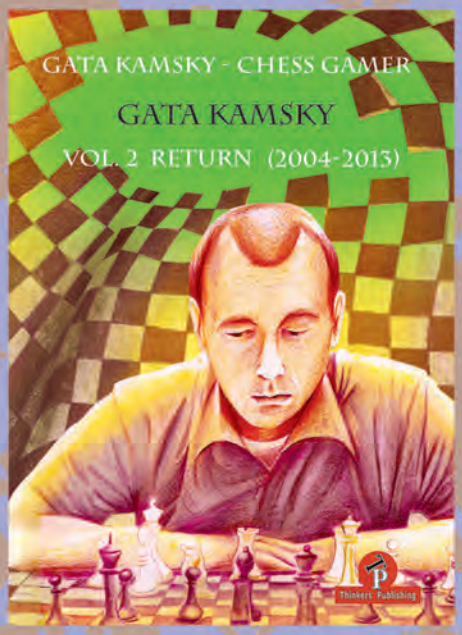

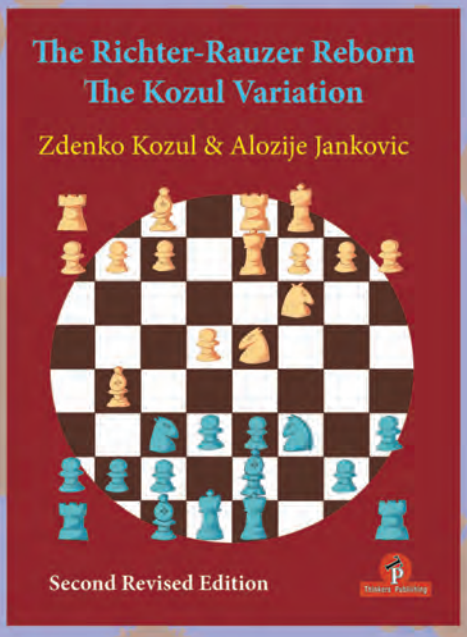

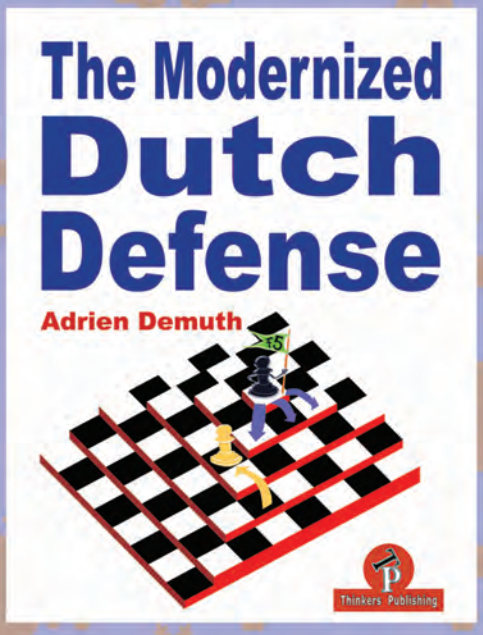

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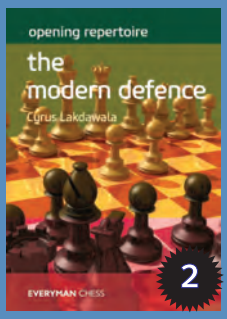

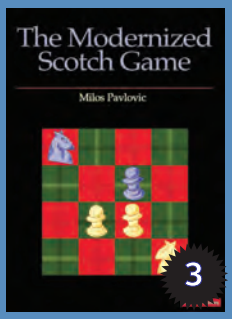

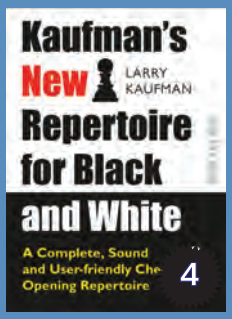

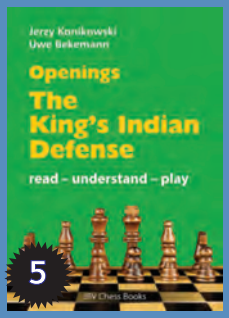

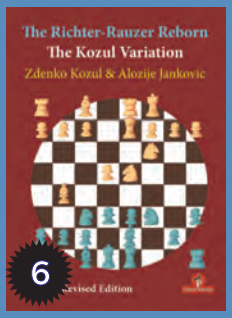

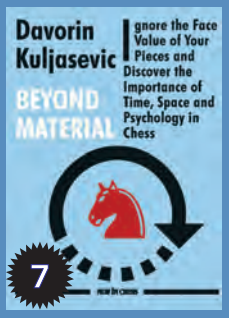
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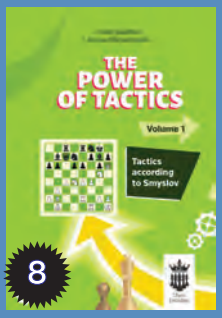

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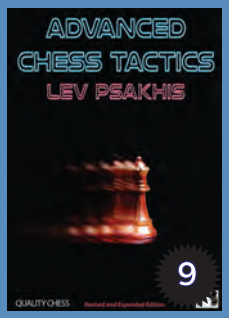

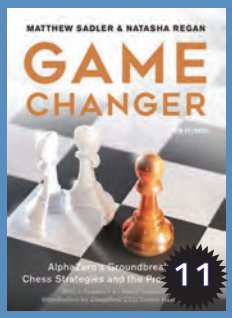

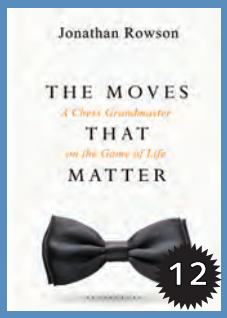

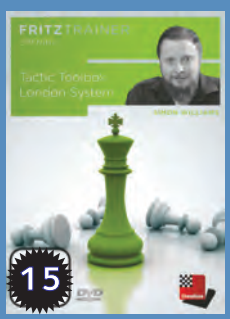

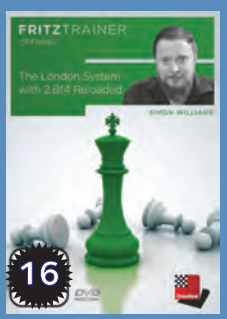

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